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OR,

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THE FIVE CHAMPIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SHOOTING MATCH.

SIMMS' Settlement, near the beautiful Cumberland, and on the bank of a small stream that was once known as Duck River, was one of the strongest and best defended, as well as one of the prettiest settlements, of the early days of western Kentucky. The families who composed it were mostly emigrants from Virginia, many of whom were connected by ties of relationship, and others by a residence of many years in the same neighborhood in their old home. They had united as one colony for the purpose of mutual advantage and protection, a strong party of men having first gone out to select a location, clear the land, and build houses and forts. These had been followed, in due course of time, by a number of others, who brought with them their own families and the families of the first settlers. The colony was subsequently increased by the addition of others from the same old Virginia neighborhood, and straggling emigrants from different parts of the country, until it became respectable in size, as well as in the character and worldly standing of its inhabitants. It was in contemplation to elevate the settlement to the dignity of a town, and to give it a more pretentious title, but the people clung to old customs and old names, and it was still called Simms' Settlement.

The colony was governed, while it remained in its chrysalis state, by a council of five men, elected yearly, who were called the "Board of Judges." This Board exercised a general and almost unlimited supervision over the affairs of the colony, punishing all offenses according to a brief but excellent code of laws that had been framed by themselves and adopted by the people, projecting and carrying out all public improvements, and levying and collecting taxes for public

expenditures. The Board was composed of the best men in the settlement, old Martin Simms, the founder of the colony, being its head, and its decisions were universally respected and without question obeyed.

The houses of Simms' Settlement were about thirty log buildings, including the "meeting-house," the school-house, and the block-house. They were not scattered or isolated, as is usually the case in a farming country, for the necessity of protection from the incursions of the savages had compelled the inhabitants to cluster their dwellings together, in the vicinity of the block-house, so that they formed quite a village. From these homes the men went out to till the fields, to clear the land, and to take care of their cattle, always carrying their rifles, and keeping watch for their stealthy and treacherous enemies, the red-men.

The block-house was a large and strong building, formed of heavy hewn timber, and loop-holed for musketry. It was two stories in height, and was surrounded by a stockade of tall and stout posts, set closely together, and driven well into the ground. The building and the enclosure—or the building itself, in case of an emergency—could hold all the inhabitants of the settlement. In addition to its other defensive powers, it was armed with a small brass cannon, mounted on the roof, of about four pounds caliber, which had been brought, with great labor, through the wilderness from distant Virginia. Charged to the muzzle with musket-balls and other missiles, it was well calculated to spread death and terror among an attacking party, and had done so on more occasions than one.

The meeting-house was used not only for purposes of public worship, but also for the regular and occasional sessions of the Board of Judges, who always sat with open doors. The minister was also the school-teacher, and was supported under this primitive union of church and state, by a direct tax, in money and in kind, on all the people. There was no jail, as offenses that were less than capital were punished only by fine, or by compulsory labor on public improvements.

Strong as they were, in their numbers, their organization and their defensive arrangements, the inhabitants of Simms Settlement were by no means exempt from Indian molestations.

The early pioneers had been forced to struggle hard to preserve their lives and property from the savage marauders, and even after the colony had largely increased, it was subject to frequent incursions and depredations. On such occasions, the inhabitants would fly for refuge to the block-house, taking thither such of their valuables as could be easily carried, and the savages would run riot among their houses, their fields, and their cattle, wherever they could not be reached by the dreaded cannon, or the almost equally dreaded rifles of the white men. The Indians seldom failed, however, to pay dearly for their conquests, as the colonists, if unable to repulse them, invariably harrassed them on their retreat, recapturing much of the stolen property, and cutting off numbers of the assailants.

Frequently, too, a man who went to his field in the morning, or who started out into the primeval forest to hunt, or a child who strayed beyond the settlement in search of berries, would never return, but would be found, if found at all, murdered and scalped in some lonely place.

These experiences taught the colonists caution, and they were obliged to be continually on their guard against the attacks and snares of their insidious and inveterate foes.

The bright May morning with which our story opens was to usher in a day of unusual festivity and merrymaking, for there was to be a shooting match in Simms' Settlement, and the shooting-match was to be followed by a grand barbecue, and the barbecue was to be succeeded by a bran dance. All the young men were to be permitted to contend in the shooting-match; every body, old and young, rich and poor, was invited to the barbecue; and no one who could "shake a foot" was expected to stay away from the bran dance.

The good people of the settlement had but few amusements, and, as a consequence, appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed those which they had. Dancing was seldom indulged in, and was of a more vigorous than scientific style; shooting matches did not occur more than three or four times in the course of the year, as the young men were too busily employed to be allowed many holidays; and a barbecue was such a rare event, that it was looked forward to for many weeks, and remembered for a much longer time. When a

shooting match, or barbecue, and a bran dance, all came together, it may be supposed that the occasion was calculated to awaken no ordinary anticipations.

This pleasant day in May was an extraordinary occasion in another respect. A treaty had been entered into with a formidable tribe of Indians, a tribe with which the settlers had been constantly at war since they had come into the country. The treaty had finally been concluded, presents had been exchanged, pipes of peace had been smoked, and all the formalities requisite to make it binding had been gone through with by both parties. It was a matter for great rejoicing to all the colonists that they were at last freed from their greatest annoyance, that peace had succeeded to war, that they were relieved from the continual dread and necessity for watchfulness which had been so long imposed upon them, and they were determined to celebrate the event in the most liberal and enthusiastic manner, by nothing less than a grand combination of shooting match, barbecue, and bran dance.

There were not wanting those who suspected the red-men of bad faith, who believed that they had treacherously entered into the treaty with the object of striking a death-blow at the struggling settlement. There had been so many instances of such duplicity on the part of the Indians, they argued, that they ought to be no more trusted after the treaty than they were before it was made. These older and more cautious persons, among whom was Martin Simms himself, urged that all proper precautions should be taken to guard against an attack by the Indians, the same as if they still considered themselves in a state of war.

This advice was not unheeded, and was partially followed. The ground selected for the shooting-match was a level plain, about a quarter of a mile from the block-house, and pickets were placed at convenient points about it, as well as in and around the little village. All the young men, and most of the old men, went armed to the scene of the festivities; indeed, they were seldom without their rifles and hunting knives. It could not be said, therefore, that reasonable precautions had not been taken, and Martin Simms expressed himself satisfied with the arrangements that were made.

At an early hour the inhabitants began to gather on the shooting-ground. The women and children came out from the village in their gayest attire, and as many as chose to sit down were accommodated with seats upon logs that had been placed for the purpose. The "Board of Judges," who were to decide upon the merits of the shooting, took their places near the target, which was a small and round piece of white board nailed against a post. In the center of the board was a bit of black paper, fastened with a pin. The day was clear and fine, the ground was dry for the season, the few trees with which the level lawn was interspersed were covered with the first leafage of spring, and nature seemed to have lent her best aid to make this festive occasion a pleasant and joyful one.

All things being ready, the competitors were called upon to come forward, and it was announced that the shooting would be first from a rest, and then "off-hand." Each was to have three shots from a rest and three shots off-hand, and he who did the best in the off-hand shooting was to be crowned by the fair hands of Lucy Simms, the acknowledged belle of the settlement.

Twenty-two young marksmen were ready to try their skill, under the critical inspection of the oldsters and the bright eyes of more than a dozen damsels, nearly all of whom could lay claim to good looks, and some of them could boast of more than ordinary beauty.

All the young men did their best in shooting from a rest, for, although there was no prize attached to this trial of skill, yet they were desirous of gaining the smiles and plaudits of the girls, who, as may be supposed, had plenty of beaux, and were free to choose those among them who pleased them best.

They practiced various modes and arts in their shooting, in order to make their shots as true and effective as possible. Some stood up and rested their rifles in the crotch of a forked stick, which each provided and arranged to suit his own taste; others assumed the same style of rest, but preferred a kneeling position; others lay flat on the ground, and fired over a log. As all were well acquainted with their own rifles, having practiced with them almost from their infancy, all were very

particular about the exact position of the small black spot that was called the center. Each, as he took his rest and his aim, directed the man in charge of the target to raise or lower the center, according as his weapon was known to shoot a little over or a little under the object at which it was directly aimed. This was allowable, as the desire was to secure good shooting, and as success was thus made to depend more upon the accurate aim of the marksman, than upon the superior qualities of his rifle.

At the close of the shooting from a rest, the best shots were unanimously declared to be those of William Simms and Henry Denton.

Between these two young men there had long existed a feeling of rivalry, amounting almost to hostility, which had at times exhibited itself in such an unpleasant manner as to merit and receive the disapproval and reproof of the elders. William Simms was the nephew of Captain Martin Simms, the founder of the settlement and its wealthiest and most influential member. A portion of his importance naturally adhered to his nephew, who was an inmate of his family, and who assumed airs of consequence and arrogance that were not calculated to endear him to the other young men. In addition to his worldly position and prospects, he was possessed of a fine face and figure, and excelled in all manly sports and accomplishments. His arrogance was exhibited, as in other matters, in his claims to the hand of his fair cousin Lucy, whom he appeared to consider as belonging to him, together with her father's property, in the event of the death of the old man. It could not be said that she had encouraged him more than the others of her numerous lovers, as she had treated him only with cousinly affection; but he felt himself secure, and acted toward her as if she was already his affianced bride.

Henry Denton, on the other hand, occupied an humble but useful position, being the son of the blacksmith of the settlement, whose trade he had learned, and whom he assisted in his labor. Old Thomas Denton was a sturdy, hard-working honest, God-fearing man, and his son was like him in many particulars, but possessed a laudable ambition to rise above his present station. In person he was inclined to be stout, rather than tall, with thews and sinews that were peculiarly adapted

to his laborious occupation, and that had gained him the victory in many an athletic contest. He was neither handsome nor learned, but his manly countenance had a pleasant and good-humored expression, and he was noted for a large share of that native intellect and shrewdness that is well called common sense. His character was marked by steady courage, unquestionable honesty, strong tenacity of purpose, and an instinctive repugnance to any thing that savored of meanness or unfairness. If not a pretender to the hand of the fair Lucy Simms, it was well known that he loved her with all the strength of his nature. Her own feelings she prudently kept to herself, but she treated the young blacksmith as kindly as any of her lovers, and frequently received attentions from him, in preference to some whom she probably considered too importunate. These apparent favors drew upon Denton the dislike of a few young men of the settlement, and especially of William Simms, who, forgetting the adage that a "cat may look at a king," denounced the presumption of the blacksmith's son, and took opportunities to annoy and even insult him. Denton bore all this with as much patience and good humor as could be expected; but the rivalry increased on the part of Simms, and the hostility had several times threatened to culminate in a personal conflict.

The off-hand shooting was more exciting than that from a rest, both on account of the greater difficulty of hitting the mark, and because of the reward that awaited the fortunate man who should be declared the winner in this trial. At the conclusion, it was found that the shots of Simms and Denton were still the best, and the judges announced that it was impossible to decide which of them, in the average of his three bullets, had done the closest shooting. It was declared, therefore, that the two young men should make another trial, and that each should have a single shot.

William Simms, with an exclamation of disgust, and with a look of contempt at Denton, which the latter returned with a quizzical smile, carefully reloaded his rifle, and took his position in front of the target.

CHAPTER II.

INDIANS ON THE PEACE PATH.

DURING the two trials of skill, the board of judges, together with several other men, were collected at a convenient spot near the target, where they could watch the shots and judge of their effect, although it required a much closer examination to determine their actual merits.

In this group was Thomas Denton, the blacksmith, who was a strongly interested spectator, particularly when it came to his son's turn to shoot.

"That's mighty strange!" he exclaimed, when it was announced that Harry's first shot had struck below the center. "May I be everlastingly squeezed in a vice, Cap'n Simms, ef that ain't powerful strange!"

"What is there about it, friend Denton, that is so strange? Your son is a very good marksman, but the best of us sometimes make poor shots."

"It ain't that, Cap'n Simms. I really believe that it don't lie in Harry Denton's eye and hand to make what mought be called a poor shot. It ain't him that's shootin', but that rifle, and I can't help thinkin' that thar's somethin' wrong about that rifle. Thar it goes ag'in!"

The young blacksmith's bullet, in fact, had struck in the lower edge of the center, cutting out a small portion of the black paper.

"Thar it goes ag'in, Cap'n Simms!" exclaimed the old man. Now, who in natur' ever knew Harry Denton to under-shoot a mark? Jest nobody. I see what the matter is, Cap'n. The fault lies in that rifle, and it's my fault that it got thar. That gun allers did shoot over, and I fixed it for him the other day. In changin' the sight, I've made it shoot jest as much too low, as it shot too high afore. The boy must lower his center. Wait a bit, and I'll do it fur him."

The blacksmith quickly stepped to the target, lowered the bit of black paper nearly half an inch, and then shouted to his son to tell him what he had done.

The young man nodded good-humoredly, fired from his rest after a steady aim, and the bullet struck in the very center of the center. His father gave vent to an exultant whoop.

"You appear to think a great deal of that boy of yours, friend Denton," remarked Captain Simms.

"Reckon I do, as I ought to, fur he's my own flesh and blood, as well as my own bone and sinner. He ain't so rich er high-raised as some folks, but I don't believe a better or smarter boy can be found any whar in this neck of woods. Then ag'in, he's all I've got in the world, sence my old woman went out of it."

"You do well to prize the youth, for he is an honor to you and a credit to the settlement. But tell me, friend Denton, if you can, what is the meaning of such a gathering of Indians here to-day? There are more of them than I have ever seen among us before, on any peaceable errand, but they seem to be quiet, and I trust they mean no harm."

There had been, in fact since the commencement of the shooting, a constant accumulation of red-men on the grounds, but they had come so silently and so gradually that their arrival had hardly been noticed, and they had been almost entirely disregarded except by a few timid women and girls, who shuddered when any of the painted and blanketed savages came near them.

Those of the neighboring Indians with whom the settlers were at peace were frequently permitted to enter the village, and to stroll about its environs, for purposes of trading or curiosity. Festive occasions, like the present, in particular, were generally honored by large delegations of red-men, who came to witness the amusements or take part in them. It was not at all surprising, that a day of such extraordinary gayety and festivity—combining the triple attractions of a shooting-match, a barbecue and a bran dance, should attract large numbers of the surrounding savages. Besides, the settlement was at peace, having concluded a solemn treaty with the only enemies that were known to reside within striking distance, and there could be no cause for apprehension, except on the part of those incredulous people who believed that the Indians had not entered into the treaty with the view of keeping it.

They had dropped in, however, one by one and two by two, and in small parties, sauntering about in a careless and natural manner, until their numbers, if they had been collected in one spot, would have appeared formidable to the most experienced of the pioneers. It was noticeable, also, that there were no women or children among them, and that the men were all armed with their rifles and fusees, while their close blankets gave ample opportunity for the concealment of weapons.

These two circumstances—their numbers, and the fact that they had come armed—had at length attracted the attention of Captain Simms, and had caused the remark which he addressed to Thomas Denton.

"I'm bound to confess, Cap'n," answered the old blacksmith, "that I never noticed 'em in partic'lar until jest now. But, the Lord be merciful! thar's a powerful number of 'em, and they've got thar guns, and I don't know what else. I don't like the looks of it a bit, Cap'n Simms, and I'm bound to confess that I feel skeery about it, 'cause I think purty much as my son Harry does, that the red rascals don't mean to stick to the treaty, but are only huntin' a good chance to butcher the whole of us."

"I was pretty much of the same way of thinking, and I am not ashamed to say that the sight I see here to-day makes me feel uneasy."

"There is no occasion for alarm," said Simon Crosswell, a stout and well-to-do farmer, who was a member of the Board of Judges. He was also more than suspected of having taken a violent fancy to Lucy Simms, which she had shown no disposition to reciprocate.

"You needn't be afraid, Captain Simms," he continued "whatever Tom Denton and his wonderful son may say about it, for there is no danger whatever. I have noticed the Indians, since they began to come on the ground, and you can easily see, if you look at them carefully, that they belong to Wahnemogo, the chief of the tribe with which we have concluded a peace. We have no right to suppose that they mean to come here and murder us, directly after having made such a solemn treaty."

"I have heard of stranger things," answered Captain

Simms. "It would not be as bad as the example that was set them by Pontiac."

"That story may be true, and it may not, but I see no use in getting scared at nothing. The fact is, that these Indians, like every body else in the country, have heard what goings-on there are to be in the settlement to-day, and they wanted to come and see us, and eat and drink with us, and have a share in the fun. As they are our friends, it would have been nothing but fair in us to invite them; but we did not, and they have invited themselves. I heard from Wahnemogo, yesterday, that they were coming, and I am glad to see them here, for my part."

"You ought not to have withheld from us, friend Crosswell, any information, that might affect the safety of our wives and families. Why have they come in such numbers, and why are they armed?"

"Because they wanted to come, I suppose, and because they expected to shoot game by the way. They seldom go any where without their guns, I am sure."

"I am still uneasy, and think it proper to inquire into the matter."

"You can do that very easily, for here comes the chief himself, and I am sure he looks as peaceable as you could ever expect an Indian to look. For my part, I think it would be a wrong and foolish thing to insult them and make them mad, by showing any suspicion of them to-day, when we have met for the express purpose of celebrating the treaty."

As they were speaking, a tall and fine-looking chief, accompanied by two warriors, approached the group.

Wahnemogo—for he was the chief—had passed the middle age of life, but his erect and powerful form, and his piercing eye, showed that he had lost none of the vigor of body and mind that had so long distinguished him as the dreaded foe of the white race. He was dressed out in all his ornaments, his face and breast and arms were painted in the most approved style of Indian art, and his head was adorned with a crest of dyed feathers.

Carrying his rifle in his left hand, he advanced in a solemn and stately manner, and extended his right hand to Captain Simms.

"Is my brother well to-day?" he asked, hardly relaxing a muscle of his grave countenance.

"I am in good health, thanks to the Great Spirit," answered the captain, accepting the proffered hand. "I hope that my red brother is also well."

"Wahnemogo is well, and it makes him feel very happy to think that there is peace between us. He is glad to see that his white brothers are glad for the same cause. He has brought some of his young men, that they may see how glad his white brothers are, that he may show them how much better is peace than war, and that they may eat and drink and be glad with their white brothers."

"I am happy to see my brother, the great chief, but it seems to me that he has brought a great many of his young men."

"Is my brother afraid? Is there not peace between us? All my young men would have come, if I could have let them, and I was grieved that I was obliged to leave so many behind."

"But my brother's young men have come armed. They have brought their guns, and their knives are in their belts."

The brow of the chief grew clouded, as Captain Simms watched him nervously, but he quickly recovered his serenity.

"It is a long path to our village," he answered. "We had little food in our lodges, and the buffalo, and the elk, and even the wild turkeys have become scarce since the white men came to our hunting-grounds. My young men must hunt, or they would starve by the way. They must carry home some meat, or our women and children will starve. Some of them have thought, also, that they might show their skill among their white brothers, in shooting with the long gun."

"I am sorry to say to my brother," answered the captain who could with difficulty conceal his uneasiness, "that we had so planned the sport to-day, that none but white men can take part in it. I am sorry to say to him, again, that we have not prepared food sufficient for so many, and that there is but little meat in our lodges. If we had known that my brother was coming with his young men, we could have treated them better, and would have been glad to do so."

"My brother need give himself no trouble about the food,

for we have not come to eat him up," gravely replied the chief. "My young men are hungry, but I will send many off to hunt for themselves, so that there will be but few of us left to eat and drink with our white brothers."

While Captain Simms was at a loss what reply to make to this speech, Wahnemogo bowed, and withdrew in as solemn and stately a manner as he had advanced. He sent his companions in different directions, and it was soon to be noticed that the Indians were gradually disappearing from the grounds, as silently and as noiselessly as they had come.

The attention of Captain Simms and his friends was immediately drawn to the shooting-match, for the second trial of skill had been concluded, and there was a dispute whether William Simms or Henry Denton had won. The judges carefully examined the target, and announced, as before stated, that it was a tie, and that the two young men must decide the contest by a shot apiece.

Young Simms was as confident and arrogant as ever, when he took his position for the last time. He slowly raised his rifle to his shoulder, amid the almost breathless attention of all, and fired. His bullet struck the target in the center, and the shot could not possibly be excelled, although it might yet be equaled. There was a general shout of admiration as this result was announced, and the marksman threw a glance of triumph at his adversary, bidding him beat that if he could.

Denton did not lose his equanimity or his good humor, but quickly advanced to the line, raised his rifle, and fired without appearing to take aim.

It needed but a moment's examination to announce that the shot was a failure. His bullet had also struck the center, but, instead of exactly filling the hole which had been made by that of Simms, it had cut a slight curve on the lower side of it.

"Very well," said the young man, with his usual pleasant smile; "I have done my best, and it can't be helped now, but I do think there is something the matter with this rifle."

Captain Simms, on the strength of the blacksmith's statement as to the alteration that had been effected in his son's rifle, was at first inclined to decide that this was not a proper

test of the merits of the two marksmen, and that another trial should be had; but he was overruled by his colleagues, and preparations were made for crowning the victor.

"What has become of the Indians?" asked the captain, looking anxiously over the ground. "Every one of them has disappeared. What does it mean?"

"It means, of course," answered Crosswell, "that Wahnenogo has ordered them away, as he promised to do. I shouldn't be surprised if he has taken offense at the suspicious manner in which you treated him. If not, he will shortly return, and then I think you had better apologize to him."

"Suppose, friend Crosswell, that you go to seek him, and bring him back here, that we may have an explanation of these matters."

"I'll do it, cap'n, and if you don't talk to him right this time, I'll take the talking on myself."

Crosswell hastened away, and Captain Simms, after dispatching a young man with a whispered message to the village, went to superintend the ceremony of the coronation.

On a sort of throne, which was simply a platform of rough planks, sat Lucy Simms, in all the radiant beauty of dark hair and eyes, rosy cheeks, and smiling countenance. Around her were clustered many of the young men and women, together with several of the elders, and to her was brought the victor of the day, to be crowned as the best marksman in the settlement.

William Simms advanced with his usual air of assurance and self-sufficiency, and with a look of triumph on his handsome features. He did not kneel, as the custom is, when he reached the platform, but only bowed his head slightly as Lucy stepped forward to meet him. In fact, he seemed to look upon the ceremony as a matter of course, and to consider that he was conferring an honor, rather than receiving one.

With a slight frown at this exhibition of arrogance, his cousin raised the crown—which was a simple wreath of early spring blossoms—and was about to place it on his bared head, when all were startled by dropping shots in the neighboring woods, accompanied by shouts and savage yells, and followed by a volley that was poured at once upon all the

groups on the grounds. The women screamed and ran in all directions, the men hastily seized their weapons, and the scene of pleasure and rejoicing was turned to one of wailing, terror, and utter confusion.

CHAPTER III.

THE BITTER END OF THE PEACE PATH.

THE Indians had formed their plans, and had carried them out, with their usual duplicity, cunning, boldness and address. Having been so long annoyed by the presence of the white men of Simms' settlement, and having found the station, with its block-house and cannon, impregnable to all ordinary modes of attack, they had resolved to resort to the basest treachery, in order to destroy, with one crushing blow, this stronghold of the hated whites. They saw that the settlement was growing quite rapidly, that lands were being cleared, and outposts pushed out, in all directions, and it was plain that they must make a determined and decisive effort, or the possession of their favorite hunting-grounds would soon pass from them entirely.

With this view, Wahnemogo sent envoys to the settlement, to say that his people were tired of war, and that they wished to make an enduring peace. The proffer of peace was joyfully received by the whites, and a time and place of meeting were appointed, at which Wahnemogo and his principal chiefs met Captain Simms and the first men of the settlement. Speeches were made, in the customary style, the pipe of peace was duly smoked, presents were exchanged, and the terms of the treaty were arranged and ratified in the most solemn style, in accordance with Indian usages.

Wahnemogo well knew that the settlers had appointed a great day of festivity, for the purpose of rejoicing over the arrival of peace, and he resolved that that day should witness the vengeance of his tribe and the destruction of the infant colony.

He gave orders that the terms of the treaty should be most faithfully observed by all his people, until the time arrived to strike the blow, and his directions were strictly observed. In order still further to conceal his design, and to convince the whites that the treaty had been made in good faith, he frequently sent his young men, singly, or in hunting-parties, to the settlement, to trade with the settlers, to carry them present, and to fraternize with them in every possible way. These emissaries not only succeeded in lulling much of the suspicion that would naturally arise among men who were well acquainted with the Indian character, but they also acted as spies, and collected such information as enabled the chief to mature his plans and perfect his preparations. He knew that the greater part of the settlers would participate in the festivities, that they would be off their guard, that the village and block-house would be almost deserted, and a savage joy filled his heart when he thought how sure and terrible his vengeance would be.

He gave no such notice of his intention to be present at the celebration, as Simon Crosswell rather boastingly asserted that he had given, but ordered his warriors to saunter in gradually and naturally, and to mingle freely with the whites, as they had done.

It was his design that they should all be on the ground together, and that, at a given signal, they should draw their concealed tomahawks, and commence an indiscriminate massacre of all within their reach, reserving their fire-arms until they should be obliged to use them. This design, however, was frustrated by the suspicions at which Captain Simms so plainly hinted, and by the chief's discovery of the fact that most of the white men had their arms in their hands. He then resolved to draw his warriors off into the woods, and to commence the attack under cover of the trees.

This was not difficult of execution, as but few guards had been set around the grounds, and as a portion of those, feeling an interest in the proceedings of their friends, had either deserted their posts, or had become careless and inattentive.

The attack was brought on sooner than he had intended, by the accidental meeting of a small party of his warriors with a few white men. The latter, while passing through the

woods, were surprised to see a number of Indians, with their rifles cocked, crawling among the bushes, sheltering themselves behind the trees, and thus stealthily approaching the lawn.

Instinctively feeling that the object of the red-men could be neither a good nor a peaceable one, they approached them, and asked them what they were doing. The savages jumped up, and answered by a volley, which was quickly returned by the rifles of the white men. The rest of the Indians, conceiving this to be the signal for the attack, poured in their fire from all sides, and the action became general.

It could hardly be called an action, however, for it was simply a surprise and a defensive retreat. The bold and hardy settlers, acting instantly upon the orders of their cool and experienced officers, formed themselves in stern and fearless array around the women and children and all who were unarmed, and retreated toward the block-house, returning the fire of their dusky adversaries with rapidity and effect.

After delivering their first fire, the greater part of the savages rushed out from their cover, hoping to profit by the expected panic of their adversaries, and to cut them down with their tomahawks. They were grievously disappointed, for there was no panic, but they were met by a close and steady fire, which mowed them down in numbers, and forced them to run back to their cover, to reload their empty guns.

The result of this onset gave the settlers an advantage, which they did not fail to improve. Contracting their line as much as possible, they ordered the helpless ones to hasten on to the block-house, while they showed a steady front to their antagonists, and retreated slowly and in good order.

To their inexpressible grief, they were compelled to leave behind them their dead and wounded friends, among whom were some women and children. There was no help for it, for, as the borderers used to say, "the skin is closer than the shirt," and it was their duty to save their own lives and those of the weaker ones, who were fleeing toward their only shelter. The wounded were instantly tomahawked, and all were scalped and terribly mangled.

The Indians had made two mistakes; first, in commencing the attack before the signal was given by Wahnemogo—

though that was the result of an accident; and second, in attempting to surround the white men, and thus dividing and scattering their forces. If they had made the assault in a body, and had charged directly out upon the lawn, there can be little doubt that they would have produced the desired panic among their antagonists, who must inevitably have fled in all directions.

Wahnemogo was not slow to perceive his error, or to endeavor to retrieve it. Collecting his forces, he advanced furiously upon the small but undaunted rear guard, with the hope of overwhelming them before they could reach the block-house. He succeeded in throwing them into some disorder, but his triumph was short-lived, for he had come within range of the cannon on the block-house, which Captain Simms had ordered to be held in readiness for an emergency. It soon opened its brazen throat, and belched forth its iron and leaden missiles, firing over the heads of the retreating white men, and into the thick ranks of their pursuers.

The effect of the "thunder gun" was speedily apparent, though, as may be supposed, the discharges of the small piece of artillery were not very "thunderous." With yells of rage and disappointment, the savages broke and sought shelter from its deadly hail, while the hard-pressed little band of white men followed the women and children into the block-house, and closed the gates.

Their troubles were not yet at an end, for the Indians had so divided their large force, that they had made an attack upon the almost undefended village. After massacring or putting to flight the few guards that had been left in that locality, they had entered the streets of the little town, ransacking the cabins, tomahawking all they met, and plying the torch with savage ferocity.

The men in the fort, as soon as their friends were safe within the walls, and they were partially relieved from the pressure of the main body of the Indians, turned the cannon and their rifles upon the murderous marauders in the village, and soon compelled them to take to their heels, leaving a large portion of the valuables that they had stolen.

Wahnemogo, as soon as he perceived that the fire was diverted from the force under his command, ordered a grand

attack upon the block-house, which was made with such vigor and spirit, that for a time it seemed likely to succeed, the furious savages rushing up to the gates, hacking at them with their tomahawks, and firing at the defenders over the palisades and through the very loop-holes of the fort.

The cannon, however, was quickly turned around to meet this new assault, and poured its destructive volleys into the outlying Indians, while the rifles of the settlers were used with equal effect upon those who were nearer to the fort.

This was too much for the red-men to stand, and they again broke, and sought cover, from which they renewed the attack by desultory firing, during which but little loss was sustained by themselves, and none by the garrison.

Thus the warfare was kept up, until sunset, when the Indians sullenly withdrew to the lawn which had been the scene of the day's festivities. Having feasted upon the good things which the whites had provided for themselves, they departed under cover of the night, taking with them nearly all the cattle and horses that belonged to the settlement. It would have been folly to attempt to pursue them, and the unfortunate settlers sadly proceeded to the mournful task of burying their dead and counting their losses.

The losses were found to be heavy. Many had fallen under the first unexpected volley of the treacherous savages, others had been slain during their masterly retreat, several had been butchered in the village, and a few had been killed and wounded in the defense of the block-house. All who had been left outside were found to have been hacked and mangled in the most barbarous manner, and their remains were carefully collected and interred.

Their other losses had also been great. Not only had their live stock been driven off, but fire had been applied with such fearful effect to their houses and barns and fences, that nearly one-half of the village was in ashes and in ruins. It was a terrible disaster—almost an irretrievable one—to the inhabitants of Simms' Settlement, and it was no wonder that they felt downhearted and discouraged.

There were other losses that were equally severe. A few of the women and children were reported as "missing," and among them was Lucy Simms, the acknowledged belle of the

settlement, who reigned supreme, not only by reason of her beauty and grace, but by her uniform kindness and amiability. Every body loved her, and not even the other pretty girls could find it in their hearts to be jealous of her.

Inquiry was made for her in all directions, but no one had seen her since the commencement of the fight—not even one of the many young men who were known to be her lovers—not even William Simms or Henry Denton.

It was true that there were some among the bodies that had been left upon the lawn, which were so mangled that they could not be recognized, and their identity could only be guessed at; but among them was not that of Lucy Simms, for there were peculiarities about her dress, by which she might have been discovered, if a scrap of it had been left.

The most reasonable surmise was that she had been carried off as a prisoner—reserved, probably, for a fate that would be worse than death—and there was not a soul who was not ready to shed tears over her loss, or to attempt her rescue if there was the least probability of success.

As all speculations were useless, and as it was idle, at that time, to talk of rescue or revenge, the settlers, after their “weary task was done,” and they were completely tired out, laid down to get such rest as they could, amid the ruin of their homes and the destruction of their hopes.

CHAPTER IV.

A WIFE OR A LIFE.

At an early hour in the morning of the day after the disastrous conflict, a number of the young men declared their intention of going in pursuit of Wahnemogo and his band—not with the expectation of conquering them, but for the purpose of harassing them as they returned to their homes, of possibly recovering some of the stolen property, and of endeavoring to ascertain what had become of Lucy Simms. The proposition met with but a faint dissent from the elders, and there was no lack of volunteers for the expedition.

Among them were William Simms, Henry Denton, and Simon Crosswell, each of whom had bravely acted his part during the fight, and had come off without a wound. Crosswell, as the oldest of the volunteers, and as a member of the Board of Judges, was appointed the leader, and a party of fourteen daring, active, strong and hardy young men set out, about an hour after sunrise, amid the prayers and God-speeds of all, on the difficult and dangerous enterprise.

All were well armed, as a matter of course, for no experienced pioneer was ever known to part with his weapons, unless under pressure of the greatest extremity; but their horses had been carried away, and they were compelled to make the journey on foot. They traveled rapidly, nevertheless, for they were accustomed to such exercise, and their hearts were in their work.

The trail was easy enough, for the Indians had no reason to anticipate pursuit, or to fear it if they had anticipated it, and had taken no pains to cover their tracks. It would have been impossible, in any event, to hide their path, as many of them were mounted, and as they drove before them a considerable number of cattle.

Among the many tracks that were visible in places where the ground was soft, Crosswell and his friends looked in vain for the imprint of the little high-heeled shoe that was known to have been worn by Lucy Simms, and they could only conclude that if she had been taken prisoner, she had been carried away on horseback. If this was the case, it was an extraordinary exhibition of care and humanity on the part of the red-men, and indicated that she was destined to a position of dignity and consideration among them, upon which none of her lovers could look with the least degree of favor.

Their doubts were solved, before long, by Denton's discovery of a small bit of rag, that fluttered from a branch of a scrub-oak, at a little distance above their heads.

The tree was instantly climbed, and the scrap was brought down for inspection, when the unanimous voice of the party at once declared it to be a portion of Lucy Simms' dress. There could be no question about it, as that dress was well known, for it was the only silk dress in the settlement, and had been received by Lucy as an heir-loom from her mother

From the position in which the scrap had been found, it was now evident, as had already been surmised, that she was on horseback, and her lovers shuddered as their imaginations already pictured her as occupying the position of a "squaw" in the dirty lodge of some barbarous and disgusting red-skin.

This point settled, there was nothing for it but to follow the trail, which they did, with the greatest possible rapidity. The Indians had traveled at a slow rate, being incumbered with the cattle, and the trail was very "warm" when Crosswell and his party reached the Cumberland. In fact, from the canoe-marks on the bank, and from other indications, it was evident that it was but a short time since the red robbers had crossed the river. At the crossing they again found a scrap of Lucy Simms' dress, hanging on a brier-bush at the edge of the bank.

While they were debating whether they should find some means of crossing the river, and should continue to follow the trail, fires were lit up on the other side, the number and extent of which convinced them that the Indians were encamped there in full force. It would be useless to make any attempt against them at that time, as their captive would be carefully guarded during the march.

The expeditionists then turned their attention to the recovery of the cattle. It was plain that a portion of the horses had been taken across the river by swimming; but others, together with the cattle, had gone in a southerly direction, probably for the purpose of finding a convenient place to cross.

Without any further delay, the party pushed on rapidly, in pursuit of the Indians who had charge of the cattle, the trail being easy to follow in the night, and came up with them an hour or so before dawn, where they had encamped for a rest, in a ravine near the river.

The animals were well secured, but their keepers, with the exception of one warrior, were sleeping around a fire. The settlers counted twelve men asleep, and one on watch, and they naturally thought that the opportunity was too good to be lost.

Half of the party cautiously crossed the ravine, so that the enemy were completely surrounded. Then, at a given

signal, they discharged their rifles into the midst of the sleeping savages, and rushed down to complete their work. All but two of the warriors were either killed or badly wounded, and one of the two was quickly dispatched. The other ran off, and terror gave such speed to his heels that he succeeded in escaping.

The young men secured the animals, and, without stopping to rest, or to exult over their victory, mounted the horses that had been retaken from the Indians, and made the best of their way homeward, driving the cattle before them as fast as possible, for they knew that the red-skin who had escaped would lose no time in giving information to his friends.

The cattle caused the march to be a slow one, though the settlers could manage them much better than their Indian drivers, and it was not until late at night that they reached the settlement, and were gladly received within the gates of the fort.

There was great joy among the inhabitants at the safe return of Simon Crosswell's party, bringing the cattle, the loss of which had been greatly mourned, and some of the horses, which were needed for daily use.

But the joy was dampened by the intelligence they brought concerning the belle of the settlement, sweet Lucy Simms. It was now certain that she had been carried off as a prisoner, and it could not be doubted, from the care and consideration with which she had evidently been treated, that the savages intended that she should become the "wife" of some chief or powerful warrior.

That Lucy Simms, so beautiful, so amiable, and so greatly endeared to all, should be compelled to submit to such degradation, was enough to fill the hearts of her friends with sorrow and indignation, and there were many who declared that such an outrage should not be permitted, if it was in the power of men to prevent it. Her lovers, in particular, were loud in their expressions of wrath, and in their threats of what they would do to their savage captors—if they could. This was no idle boasting, for there was not one of them who was not willing and anxious to peril his life in her service.

No one was more affected by the great misfortune of Lucy, than Captain Simms. She was his only child, his son having

been killed or carried off by the Indians, many years ago, in an attack upon a settlement in the northern part of the State, in which the captain also lost his wife. She was dear to him above all earthly things, and he lavished upon her an intensity of affection that was increased by the warmth and sincerity with which she returned it. If she was the pet and the favorite of the settlement, she was ten times more his darling and his idol, and he knew that none of her lovers could adore her more truly than he did, although their love might partake of a different nature. He spared no pains to please her and to gratify all her wishes, and she, in her turn, was equally assiduous to promote his comfort and to solace his declining years. Father and daughter were all in all to each other, and it was partly on his account, perhaps, that she forbore to express a preference for any one of her lovers.

The blow that deprived the old man of his child seemed almost to deprive him of his reason. He sat, for hours at a time, with his head buried in his hands, answering no questions, and not even looking up when he was spoken to. He refused food, and would have nothing to do with the discussions on public affairs, in which he was called upon to participate. His strong nature appeared to have given way entirely, and he was so completely prostrated, in body and mind, that it was feared he would never recover from the shock.

A change came over the old man, however. About noon on the day after Crosswell's party returned, he suddenly rose from his seat, and immediately went to the meeting-house, which had been spared by the flames, and which was still used as the council-room of the Board of Judges.

He immediately sent a messenger through the village, requesting all the young men to join him at the meeting-house without delay. Conjecturing that some important enterprise was on foot, and that the captain was meditating a blow against their Indian aggressors, they obeyed the summons with alacrity, and the building was soon filled with the hardy young pioneers, together with a number of older persons, and women and children, who had been attracted thither by curiosity or motives of interest.

When all were seated, the old man rose, requested silence, and proceeded to address them. His aged countenance,

furrowed by years and grief, and his tottering form, almost broken by this last calamity, told how greatly he had suffered, and elicited various expressions of sympathy from his audience.

"My friends," he said, "the disaster that lately befell us was a terrible one, and it is owing to the great goodness of God, and the steady bravery of our young men, that any of us escaped with our lives. Our losses have been great but they are not all of them such losses as we can not recover from. Our cattle have nearly all been brought back, and many of our horses have been returned to us. Our houses, and barns, and fences can be rebuilt, and none of us are destitute of food or clothing. Such losses may be repaired, or may be borne with patience; but there are other losses, that can never be made up to us on this earth, as those too well know who lost their relatives and friends on that bloody day. I sustained a loss, then, which was the greatest calamity that could possibly happen to me. You all knew my dear girl, and she was dear to most of you, if not to all. To me she was so very dear, that life would be worth nothing to me without her. I am, what is called in this country, a rich man, but I would not give one word from my Lucy's lips, or one smile of her sweet face, for all I own, or could ever expect to own."

Here the old man broke down, for tears flowed plentifully from his eyes, and his utterance was choked by sobs. Many among his audience shed tears, and others expressed their feelings in various ways, but all were silent, for they respected his great grief. After a while, he became calm, and continued as follows:

"While her fate was uncertain, the agony was enough for me to bear; but when it became known that she had been taken prisoner and carried to the Indian villages, and when it was made plain, by indications with which most of us are acquainted, that it is the intention of the savages to force her to submit to a condition of life that would be worse than death, the blow was too hard for her old father, and I sunk under it. To you who have known her so long, and especially to those of you who love her, I appeal, and ask if Lucy Simms shall be subjected to such a fate, while an arm can be raised in her defense?"

"No, never!" was the unanimous shout in all parts of the room, and the shouting had increased to an uproar, when the captain again stretched out his arm to request silence.

"Let us, then, reason about the matter as calmly as we can," he continued. "We know that it would be as useless to attack the Indians in their villages, as to attempt to change the course of the wind. It would be impossible, also, within sufficient time, to collect from the other settlements a force large enough to defeat them, if it could be collected at all. The only possible chance to rescue my girl from the savages, lies in the use of the greatest caution, skill, and boldness. She must be taken, if we get her at all, out of the heart of the Indian villages. Two men could do this better than a hundred, and one man could do it better than two.

"I have lands and money," continued the old man, "and I would willingly give them all to him who would bring my girl back to me in safety; but I feel sure that that would not be so strong an inducement—to some of you, at least—as the offer I am about to make. I now promise, before you all, that Lucy Simms shall be the wife of the man who will rescue her from the savages. Who will volunteer to save her?"

CHAPTER V.

THE FIVE CHAMPIONS.

THE chorus of responses to the offer of Captain Simms was almost deafening. There was not a young man in the room but held up his hand, and shouted "I," at the top of his voice. Several, also, who were more advanced in years, but still unmarried, joined in the general acclamation, for all were willing to sacrifice their lives for Lucy without any reward, and the prospect of *such* a reward was enough to send the blood tingling through the veins of young and old.

"I was sure, my friends," continued Captain Simms, "that you would gladly do all you could for my child and that I had only to ask your assistance, to receive it. If I could be

young again, I would never think of entrusting the task to any other man, but I am crippled by age and feebleness, and am as useless as a broken bow. It almost seems as if all of you with one voice, had offered your help; but only one volunteer can be received—one at a time. If one should fail, another might be accepted to take his place—perhaps still another; but we must not waste our young men; we must not throw away their lives to no purpose, for they are valuable to their relatives and to all of us, as well as to themselves. This is a dangerous business, my friends, but you are accustomed to danger, and know how to meet it. The question now is, who was the first man to volunteer?"

"I spoke first!" was shouted by many voices, in all parts of the room.

"It is certain that you did not all speak first," said the old man, "and I see no way for you to decide the question, but to leave it to me. My sight and hearing are still very good, for years have have not harmed them in the least, and I am sure that Simon Crosswell spoke first."

"And I spoke second, sir, for I stood just at Mr. Crosswell's side," exclaimed Henry Denton.

"I believe you did, and my nephew, William Simms, was the third. Without meaning to disparage any others, I must say that three better men could not be found, or three men who would be more likely to accomplish the task which they have volunteered to undertake. It makes my heart bleed to think that either of them might lose his life in such a desperate venture, but I knew that there were those among you who were determined to make this attempt of their own accord, and I have thought it best that it should be made in the way I have proposed, as it avoids a waste of life, and offers the only chance of success, and I assure you, for my part, that I shall pray daily and nightly for the man who goes forth to the rescue of my child."

In deference to universal clamor, and to the importunities of the three champions, the captain consented that if the first man chosen should not return within a week, the second should be sent; if the second did not return within a week, the third should be sent.

The people then dispersed and went their ways, the young

men to envy the good fortune of Simon Crosswell and the old men and women to pray for the success of the desperate undertaking.

"I'm powerful glad and thankful, Captain Simms, that I happened to be the first man to speak," said Crosswell, as he walked home with the bereaved father. "It makes me feel almost happy to think of it, and I know that more than one is envying my good luck. It seems nothing but right and proper that the choice should fall upon me, for I am afraid that it was through my foolishness that Lucy was lost. If I had listened to what you said at the shooting-match, and had joined in with you when you were suspicious about so many red-skins being on the ground, this trouble might not have happened."

"Let us say no more of that, friend Crosswell," replied the captain. "The past can never be mended, but the future may be improved. You are going on a dangerous expedition, and I have a word of advice for your ear."

"I hope you don't suppose, captain," interrupted the champion, "that I would ever give a thought to danger where Lucy Simms is concerned. It would be impossible to say how much I love her, and I would risk my life for her a dozen times any day."

"Not so fast, my friend. The very thing I wished to say to you is, that you *should* give a thought to danger—not only one, but many thoughts. You are a brave man and a good man, Simon Crosswell, but you are entirely too rash and incautious. Any man can risk his life a dozen times a day, but he is a very foolish man who risks it uselessly. Your bravery would only do harm, unless it was accompanied by caution, and a rash or indiscreet action on your part might make the condition of my child worse than it now is."

"When you put it in that light, Captain Simms, you touch me mighty hard, and I promise you that I will be as cautious as it is possible for human nature to be, for I had rather be chopped into little pieces, than hurt a hair of her head. I will bring her back to you within a week, or will leave my bones among the red-skins."

"When do you expect to start?"

"To-night. Right away; as soon as I can get my rifle and a little provision for the tramp."

"There you are wrong again. You are speaking and acting too hastily. It is a hard journey, and you will have little chance for rest, while you will need all your strength and all your senses. You had better spend the night in sleep, so that you will feel fresh and in good condition for an early start in the morning."

"It seems to me that you are very particular, captain. According to my notions, such business ought to be attended to without loss of time. But I'll do as you say, to please you."

Before it was dawn the next morning, the eager Crosswell mounted his horse, and sallied forth on his perilous expedition. He was dressed in his hunting-suit, and armed with his rifle, tomahawk and knife. Besides a good supply of ammunition, he had a bag slung at his side, containing cold meat and bread, and some parched corn in his pockets.

Being well mounted, and eager to make up for what he considered lost time, he rode rapidly, and reached the Cumberland without encountering any opposition. There, leaving his horse in a thicket, where the animal could browse on the early grass, he hastily constructed a small raft on which he ferried across the river.

Once on the other side, he knew that he was fairly within the Indian country, and at no great distance from their village. Remembering the advice of Captain Simms, he resolved to act with all possible prudence and caution. He was a skillful hunter and an experienced woodsman, and had frequently distinguished himself in encounters with the Indians by his bravery and intelligence. He had often been told that if prudence was added to these qualities, he could not be surpassed in Indian warfare, and he was determined that on this occasion, which was more than life or death to him, he would prove that he could be as cautious as any man.

Accordingly, although his progress was still quite rapid, he kept all his senses on the alert, picking his way through thickets and cane-brakes as much as possible, and carefully avoiding the Indian trails. Twice he met small parties of the red-men, but he concealed himself closely, and they passed without noticing him.

As night came on, he moved with still greater caution, and soon he heard the tinkle of a bell. Stealthily creeping up in the direction of the sound, he perceived that the bell was attached to the neck of a horse that was grazing among the trees, and he knew that he must now be very close to the village.

He continued to advance with the greatest care, until he came in view of the houses and wigwams, which were quit numerous, and were scattered among the trees on a nearly level plain. Fires were burning in various parts of the village, and he could plainly distinguish the council-house, and could see men and women walking about the lodges. His heart was filled with the thought that sweet Lucy Simms was in the power of those ruthless savages, and it beat high with the hope that he might rescue her and receive her as his reward.

The first thing to be done was to ascertain where she was kept and how she was guarded, and for this purpose it was necessary to approach as near as possible to the village, and even to enter it, if he could do so with any degree of safety. He continued to creep along, therefore, working his way slowly and silently, though the growing darkness afforded a good cover for his movements.

He had not progressed far, and had not yet come within speaking distance of the lodges, when he heard voices near him. Peering out from the little thicket of bushes in which he had ensconced himself at the first alarm, he perceived an Indian woman, holding by the hand a boy of five or six years of age, with whom she was talking and laughing. They came within a few paces of the place where he was concealed, when the woman sat down under a scrubby tree, and continued to play with the boy and to talk to him.

Crosswell listened, for he was pretty well acquainted with the language in which they spoke, and he soon heard enough to convince him that the boy was the youngest child of the chief, Wahnemogo, and the special favorite of his father.

"Wahnemogo is a great warrior and a great chief," said the woman, "and Tickatommo will one day be a great warrior too. Wahnemogo has filled his wigwam with scalps of the white men for Tickatommo, and he shall dance around

them, and one day Tickatommo shall have a white girl for his wife, like the girl his brother Melentha brought home."

Crosswell's blood was fired by the last words, and he was suddenly struck by one of those ideas which only need success to stamp them as the offspring of genius.

Here was the favorite child of the great chief, Wahnemogo—in his power—almost within his grasp. Why should he not seize the boy, and carry him off, to be held as a hostage for the recovery of Lucy Simms? It could easily be done, and the possession of the boy would undoubtedly compel the chief to deliver up his fair prisoner, whatever Melentha might say. The spy could not have hoped that such a chance would present itself—a chance by which, almost without bloodshed, and with comparatively little danger, he could so certainly and easily accomplish his object, distance all the young men of the settlement, and secure the hand of Lucy as his reward. It would be necessary, to be sure, to kill the woman, and to kill her quickly and silently, so that she could give no alarm; but he had been too long accustomed to the barbarous scenes of border warfare, to permit himself to be troubled by a matter of so little consequence.

Hardly had the idea entered his head, when he proceeded to put it in practice.

Waiting until the woman's back was turned for a moment, he leaped from his covert, seized the boy with his left hand, and with his right struck at her head with his tomahawk.

As usual, he had acted too hastily, and without sufficient calculation. His tomahawk struck one of the branches of the scrubby tree, and severed it, but did no other harm.

The woman uttered a piercing shriek, and ran swiftly toward the village, yelling as she went. Crosswell threw the tomahawk at her, but missed her, and then, snatching up the child, he attempted to escape.

The attempt was a useless one, for the village was alarmed, and the woods were quickly swarming with warriors, who pressed on, with loud yells, in pursuit of the fugitive. He ran well, for he ran for life and love; but he was greatly encumbered by the boy, who kept scratching, kicking and biting him, retarding his progress considerably.

He held his course, as well as he could, within the thick

woods and bushes, hoping to elude his pursuers in the darkness, but the hope was a vain one, for they pounced upon him just as he stumbled over a log and fell to the ground.

After kicking and pummeling him, and beating him most unmercifully with sticks and ramrods, they dragged him in triumph to the village, cursing and abusing him all the way.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHAMPION'S FATE.

WHEN he reached the village, the unfortunate prisoner was tied to a stake in front of the council-house, which the warriors entered for the purpose of deciding what should be done with him. Their discussions were very noisy and uproarious, so much so that portions of them reached his ears, and they were by no means calculated to calm his feelings, or to strengthen his nerves.

He was accused—and nothing could be plainer than the proof—of having attempted to steal the chief's child, and to murder its nurse. What punishment, demanded the warriors, with great bitterness and vociferation, could possibly be awarded to such an atrocious criminal, but death, the most miserable and painful death? Poor Crosswell understood this well enough, and his heart sunk within him when he contemplated the fate that was in store for him; but he had expected to receive nothing less if he should be captured, and he resolved to bear his torments, whatever they might be, with all possible firmness and fortitude.

While the warriors were engaged in their clamorous deliberations, the prisoner was surrounded by squaws and boys who amused themselves with pulling his hair, slapping and pinching his cheeks, beating him, kicking him, tearing off his clothes, throwing hot coals and ashes upon his skin, and assailing him with the most violent and opprobrious epithets. It was quite a relief to him when the men came out of the council-house, and commenced dancing and yelling around

him with savage glee. When one of them came near the stake to which he was tied, Crosswell asked him, in the Indian tongue, what they intended to do with him. The man only replied by a ferocious scowl, and walked away.

It was not long before he was enabled to judge for himself, and his worst anticipations were fully confirmed. He was seized and stripped to the skin, and his face and body were painted black—a sure indication that he was doomed to death. Then a double line was formed, composed of men, women and boys, armed with knives, tomahawks, clubs, sticks, and other less dangerous weapons. At the outward end of the line were stationed two stalwart warriors, with long knives, and at the other end, near the door of the council-house, was a painted post, by the side of which stood an Indian with a drum.

Crosswell was led out to the extremity of the line, and was told, as if in confidence, that if he could reach the post at the council-house without being killed, his life would thereafter be safe. Animated by this promise, he resolved to do his best and to make a good race for life. He coolly measured the ground that he would be required to traverse, and estimated the number and character of his foes.

The drum beat, and he started forward.

Dodging the strokes of the two long knives, he bounded through the lines like a deer, leaping, turning, and twisting his body, to avoid the blows that were showered upon him on all sides. He received, nevertheless, much more than a fair allowance of buffets, cuts and stripes, and handfuls of sand and ashes were thrown into his eyes, nearly blinding him, and rendering the race a very difficult as well as a painful one.

At last, covered with blood, and nearly exhausted, he reached the post, and threw his arms around it. He had run the terrible gantlet without being killed, and had received an assurance that his life would be spared. He felt, therefore, that he had great reason for thankfulness.

He was quickly torn from the post, and carried back to his stake, where he was securely bound, and the warriors again entered the council-house. Wahnemogo, however, remained behind, and approached the prisoner and accosted him, asking him where he had come from.

"From Simms' Settlement," was the calm reply.

"What did you come here for?"

"To see what I could see."

"Why did you want to steal my boy?"

Crosswell was about to state the true reason, but he remembered the advice of Captain Simms, and was determined not to be betrayed into any imprudence by which Lucy might be endangered.

"I tried to take him because I wanted to punish you for your treachery," he said.

"Did Captain Simms tell you to take him?"

"No; I did it of my own mind."

With an angry gesture the chief turned away and followed the other warriors into the council-house.

Their deliberations, this time, were more lengthy and less noisy, and the prisoner was unable to obtain an inkling of what they intended to do. After a while they came out, in grim and ominous silence, and he was bound to his stake in such a manner that he could move neither his hands nor his feet nor his head, and was left in charge of two warriors.

He was not only racked by pain in every part of his body, but he was oppressed by the uncertainty of his fate, though he felt that it could not be any thing less than death, when he reflected that the Indians were much more prolific of promises than performances. He deeply regretted the unfortunate rashness by which he had been brought into his perilous position, for he well knew that if he had used a little more care and calculation, he could have accomplished his object, and might have effected his escape. But what pained him most was the fear that his indiscreet conduct and his capture might have the effect of rendering Lucy's position a worse one—of inducing the Indians to transport her to some distant town, where her recovery would be impossible. With these fears and anticipations his mind was filled, until his exhausted nature could no longer endure the strain, and he slept.

In the morning he was unbound, and was taken to a stout post that was driven into the ground, in front of the council-house. His arms were tied tightly behind his back, and fastened to a rope, about four feet long, that was attached to the post. Then the Indians proceeded to place around him

of small hickory rods, completely surrounding the stake, but not near enough for him to reach them, if he could have used his hands.

Rightly conjecturing the meaning of these fearful preparations, he asked one of the warriors if they intended to burn him. The Indian replied by a nod and a savage grin, and then walked away.

The piles of hickory were set on fire, while the men, women and boys danced and yelled around the unhappy captive. They seized the burning sticks, and thrust them into his flesh, threw burning coals upon the ground where he was compelled to walk, and shot charges of powder all over his body, until he was completely blistered from head to foot. Thus they chased him around the stake, hooting, yelling, and taunting him continually.

In his agony he begged them to shoot him, to kill him quick; but, as his appeals only increased their glee, and caused them to redouble their torments, he ceased to speak, except to pray God to have mercy on his soul.

With his half-blinded eyes he saw Lucy Simms, who was brought out from a lodge by two Indians, as if to become an unwilling witness of the fearful spectacle. He called to her, but she covered her face with her hands, and he saw no more, for just then a handful of hot ashes was thrown in his eyes, by which his sight was for ever closed.

Thus the tortures were continued, but his nerves had become less sensitive to pain, and he only moaned piteously as he feebly walked around the stake. It was after midday when he finally succumbed, and sunk upon the ground, where he was instantly scalped, and covered with the burning coals; and that was the last of earth with Simon Crosswell.

At night a few blackened bones were all that was left of the daring champion.

CHAPTER VII.

TWO CAPTIVES.

It would have been impossible for Lucy Simms to explain the manner in which she was captured.

Startled by the unexpected volleys from the woods, and by the horrid yells of the attacking savages, she had been seized with a panic that bereft her of her senses for the time being. She ran, without knowing why or whither, and rushed directly into a small party of advancing Indians. She fell to the ground as she was seized, and their tomahawks were raised over her head, when a tall and fine-looking young warrior rushed forward, put aside the uplifted weapons, and saved her life. She knew nothing more, until she found herself sitting on the ground, near the platform that had lately been her throne, guarded by an ugly old Indian.

Around her lay the mangled bodies of her friends and associates, and beyond she could see the smoke and flame of the burning village, and the horde of infuriated savages pressing fiercely upon the settlers, who were retreating toward the block-house. The sight was a most distressing one, for it seemed to her that her friends would surely be overwhelmed, and she knew that her father was there, with many who were dear to her, exposed to the greatest danger, if not already dead.

She covered her face with her hands, as if she sought to shut out the terrible scene, but she could not lose sight of it, for it rose up before the eye of her mind, as plainly as if she was still looking at it. She felt an almost irresistible desire to rise to her feet and run to the village, to join her friends and share their fate; but, whenever she made the least motion, the ugly old Indian scowled at her fiercely, and laid his hand upon his tomahawk.

Thus she was compelled to keep perfectly quiet, and remained in the same position until sunset, when the Indians, abandoning their fruitless siege of the block-house, withdrew to the

lawn, and gormandized among the eatables that had been prepared for the festival.

In a short time she was approached by the young warrior who had rescued her from the tomahawks of her friends, and who wore on his head the crested plumes of a chief. He was accompanied by a renegade white man, in whom she recognized Sam Steele, a fellow who had been driven out of the settlement for thieving, and who was reported to have joined the Indians.

The chief wore a pleasant smile, which contrasted strangely with his hideous paint and blood-stained hands, and he spoke in the Indian tongue to the white man, pointing toward Lucy.

"This chief wants me to say a few words to you, Miss Lucy," said Steele. "His name is Melentha, and he is a great warrior. He is a great chief, too, for he is the son of Wah-nemogo, who is the most powerful of all the chiefs, and he is only second to his father in the tribe. He says that he has often heard of you; that his young men who have been to the settlement have told him that you were very handsome, but he never supposed that any woman could be as handsome as you are. He saved you from being tomahawked, over yonder, and he thinks, I reckon, that you ought to be thankful to him for that."

Lucy bowed her acknowledgment of the favor, and silently awaited the further revelations of the renegade.

"Melentha is a great chief and a great warrior, as I told you," continued Steele. "He has taken a powerful fancy to you, and it's lucky for you that he has, or your long, black hair, with your scalp at the end of it, would now be hanging at some red-skin's belt. He can do for you what no other man could—he can save your life, and can make you as happy as you could expect to be in the Injun country, where you are going. There's no use in your thinking that you will ever get back to your folks, for there ain't men enough in Kentucky to take you, and you had better try to forget all such ideas. I tell you again that Melentha has taken a powerful fancy to you, and he means to do the best he can by you. He hasn't got any wife, and he don't want any other besides you; so you needn't fear any trouble on that ground, if you happen to be one of the jealous kind."

Shame and indignation sent the hot blood rushing to the girl's face, and it was absolutely crimson as she stood up and flashed back a defiance with her eyes and with her tongue.

"Do you mean that that man wants to make *me* his wife?" she angrily exclaimed. "Does he mean that *I* shall share his wigwam, and herd with his wretched race? The tongue ought to be paralyzed that would utter such a thought. The proposal is bad and infamous enough in any shape, but it is doubly horrible and disgusting when it is made by the lips of a convicted thief, a man who has left his own country and kindred, to be a spy and a dog for a set of bloody and barbarous savages. Tell your chief that I will die before I will listen to him, that it would have been far better to have let them kill me where I fell, than to save my life for such a purpose."

"It's best not to talk in that way, or to take on so, Miss Lucy," replied the renegade, in a soothing tone. "You need not be getting mad at me, neither, nor throwing up things at me, for I am only telling you what the chief told me to say. Such as I am, your folks made me, and they've got to pay for it; but I couldn't ever be brought to hurt *you*. There are some things that are worse than being killed, Miss Lucy, and if I was you I would put as good a face on the matter as I could, 'cause you're caught, and there's no getting out of it, and it ain't worth while to make the chief mad right at the start."

Either Lucy was impressed by the advice of the renegade, or she was inspired with a portion of her father's caution and policy, for she changed her tactics, and the look of anger passed out of her face. Melentha, who had been grinning and smirking, apparently endeavoring to make himself look as fascinating as he could, called to a young Indian, who ran and brought a quantity of meat and bread. Lucy was pressed to eat, and she made a pretense of doing so; but her heart was so full of sad thoughts and painful anticipations, that she could have no relish for food. Melentha and the renegade evidently had no such trouble, for they bolted the bread and meat in large mouthfuls, and soon caused a complete disappearance of the provisions.

"There is one thing you can tell me which it would give

me great relief to know," said Lucy, addressing herself to Steele. "Is my father living?"

"I reckon he is, Miss Lucy, as I didn't see him any where among those who were lying on the ground, and as the redskins would have made a great fuss if they had got his scalp."

"Can you tell me whether Harry Denton is alive?"

"I can answer that easy enough, for I saw him rush out of the fort and carry in a wounded man, right under our guns, and I reckon more than twenty bullets were fired at him. I don't see why you should be asking about that chap. He is a smart young feller, I allow, but you needn't hope that he can do any thing toward getting you out of this scrape."

Lucy made no reply, but she seemed to be calmer and more at ease after receiving this intelligence.

When the Indians, having eaten all that was to be found, took up their line of march toward the west, the girl was placed on a horse, by the directions of the young chief, and was even accommodated with a side-saddle that had been stolen from the settlement.

Thus provided, she was made to ride about in the middle of the long and straggling line of Indians, who traveled without any attempt at order or discipline. On one side of her rode the young chief, Melentha, and on the other side the white man, Sam Steele. Her Indian admirer, in order to please her, had actually washed the blood from his hands, and had concealed under his blanket the scalps that he had taken. It was evident that he was a very gentlemanly sort of savage, and that he meant to try the effect of his fascinating qualities and persuasive manners before proceeding to woo her by such forcible means as lay in his power.

He was careful to protect her from overhanging vines and branches, and to lead her in the easiest paths. He talked to her frequently, through the interpreter, and showered upon her the most extravagant praises and the most fulsome compliments. If he had been any thing but an Indian, stained with the blood of her friends, doubtless Lucy would have regarded him as an agreeable escort. Being what he was, she thought it the part of prudence to appear pleased at his fine speeches, and to answer him in a conciliatory tone—in other words, to

"keep on the right side" of him. Consequently, she forced herself to smile as graciously as possible, and framed her answers so that he should suppose that he was not personally offensive to her. Melantha was greatly gratified at seeing this disposition on the part of his captive, and manifested his gratification by a profusion of his most alluring smiles and smirks. He was not without his full share of Indian vanity, and he fondly fancied that his good looks and winning address had produced this change in the conduct of the maiden. He followed up the impression, therefore, by boasting grandiloquently of his family and himself.

They had not gone far when Lucy perceived that there was another female captive among the Indians, and she soon discovered who she was. It was Sally Waitstill, one of those who had been reported as missing after the fight, and whose body was supposed to be one of those that could not be recognized.

Sally was about twenty-two years of age, was tall, strong and hardy, and was by no means handsome, although not positively ugly. She was a young woman of a very peculiar character, independent in her thoughts and actions, and possessed of a decided will of her own. It was the generally received opinion that she would live and die an old maid, however much the young men of the settlement might be in want of wives, for none of them would take a partner who was obviously so determined to "rule the roost." She had a good heart, notwithstanding her peculiarities, and was liked and respected even by those who stood in awe of what they called her temper.

Lucy Simms well knew what Sally was, and she had a high opinion of the strong-minded and outspoken girl. With her, at least, Sally had never grumbled, and nothing had occurred to mar their friendship. When she saw Sally dragged along as a prisoner, she felt compassion for her, and at the same time thought that her friend might be servicable to her, if they could not be of advantage to each other. For her own part, she knew that the best thing she could do would be to endeavor to appear reconciled to her situation, and to keep on good terms with her captors, for thus only could she hope to put them off their guard, and to be allowed a degree of liberty

that might be useful to her. All her thoughts and actions were now directed toward the possibility of effecting her escape, and she was sure that the assistance of Sally Waitstill, if she could secure it, would be of great benefit to her, whatever plans she might form, and in whatever circumstances she might be placed.

But Sally was not in a condition, at that time, to render assistance to any one. She had been captured by a hard-featured and cross-tempered warrior, who had tied a rope around her waist, and was dragging her along on foot. He stormed and taunted her as he went, and every now and then he added to his wordy abuse a severe punch with the handle of his tomahawk.

The way was rough, often passing through briars and brambles, and across little creeks and sloughs, and the persecutions of her captor were both annoying and painful; but Sally bore it all without murmuring, until she came to a very muddy slough, which she hesitated to enter, and the old Indian punched her and kicked her, to drive her on. As quick as thought she picked up a stout stick that lay in the path, and struck the savage on the head with such force as to knock him down. He rose to his feet with an Indian imprecation, and rushed upon her with his tomahawk, but was prevented from doing any damage by some of his fellows, who held his hands, and laughed heartily at his discomfiture. Out of compliment to the spirit and bravery of the girl, they carried her over the muddy slough.

Lucy Simms witnessed this occurrence, as well as a portion of the abuse to which her friend was subjected, and resolved to relieve her if she could. Accordingly she exerted herself to be very gracious to the young chief, and entreated him, through the interpreter, to get a horse for her friend, and to let her ride in company with herself and her companions.

Melentha demurred to this request, and was not at all disposed to comply with it, but one of Lucy's expressive smiles determined him to do her bidding. He rode forward and took Sally Waitstill from the possession of the hard-featured Indian, ordered a young warrior to dismount from his horse, and made Sally get on the animal's back in his stead. In a short time

she was riding by the side of her friend, pleased and amazed at the consideration with which she had been treated.

The two young women said but little to each other at that time, as they knew that it would not be prudent for them to say what they wished to say; but Sally easily understood, from the words that the chief addressed to Lucy, through the interpreter, the position in which she stood with regard to him.

The old fellow from whom Sally had been taken, was loth to be deprived of his prisoner, and grumbled a great deal; but, Melentha's word was law, and he was obliged to submit. He submitted very ungraciously, however, and walked near the girl as she rode, watching her constantly, and vowing that he would have her back again.

Lucy Simms was certain that she would be followed, for she knew that there was more than one young man in the settlement who would seek her out and attempt to rescue her, however hopeless the attempt might be, and she sought some means of leaving in the path a mark or token by which she could be traced. Nothing could be more easily identified than her silk dress, which was known by every man, woman and child in the settlement. It was a strong and enduring fabric, woven as if it was intended to last a century, and the trees, bushes and briers through which she rode made but little impression upon it. She contrived, however, to tear off a small scrap, which she concealed in her hand, ready to use when an opportunity should be offered. Her horse stumbled under a post-oak, and she took advantage of the accident to fasten her scrap to a limb of the tree, which she did without being perceived. She dropped two other scraps in the way, but they were probably picked up or trampled out of sight by those who came after.

It was late in the afternoon when they reached the Cumberland, and there a division was made among the Indians, a small party driving the cattle and some of the horses up the river, and the main body crossing on the rafts and in the canoes that had brought them over. As Lucy went down the bank to cross with Melentha and her other companions, she left another bit of her dress on a brier at the edge.

When they reached the other side of the river, the Indians

concluded to encamp until the next morning, as they were quite wearied by their journey to and from the settlement, as well as by their hard day's fighting. Young men were sent out to kill game, and large fires were built, as if they neither expected nor cared about any pursuit on the part of the settlers. When the game was brought in, it was speedily cooked and eaten, and the tired warriors laid themselves down to sleep, leaving a few guards about the encampment.

Lucy Simms and Sally Waitstill were supplied with blankets, and were allowed to sleep near each other, but were carefully watched during the night. Before they slept, each whispered to the other her tidings and her thoughts, and they mutually comforted and cheered each other, although they were unable, at that time, to form any definite plans for the future.

CHAPTER VIII.

LUCY'S LOVER

EARLY the next morning Wahnemogo and his band were again on the move toward their village, which they reached, being no longer encumbered by the cattle, a little after noon. Lucy Simms was surprised to see it so large and well-built, as well as so orderly and neat. As they approached it, the warriors raised the scalp-halloo, and the women and children ran out to meet them and to congratulate them on their victory. These clamorous and annoying members of the community were very desirous of insulting and abusing the two prisoners, but they were restrained by the presence and influence of Melentha, who sternly kept them at a distance.

Sally Waitstill's ugly old master, whose hard name was Caughwecatico, claimed her as soon as she entered the village, saying that she was his by capture, to do with as he pleased, and that he was determined to have her. Lucy Simms protested against his claim, but Melentha declared that he was unable to interfere in the matter any further, and that her captor could not be prevented from taking her. She was

given up to him, therefore, and was led away unresisting, after pressing Lucy's hand, as an assurance that she might be depended upon to do all that she could for her friend.

Lucy was conducted by Melentha to the lodge of his aunt, a wrinkled and hideous old hag, named Tinnequa, who was doubtless considered by Melentha a very proper sort of duenna for his intended wife. As she was nearly bedridden, her chief qualification for that important office was, that she could talk English pretty well. To this ancient dame he explained who Lucy was, announced his intention of making her his wife, and told her to keep the girl in her lodge, to treat her well, and to take as good care of her as if she was already the bride of a chief.

Tinnequa received Lucy as graciously as she knew how to, though her reception was attended by many grunts and groans. She spread a couch of skins for her in a corner of the lodge, and made all possible arrangements for her comfort. After a while Melentha sent in some boiled meat and corn-cakes, on which the two women made their dinner together. Lucy ate heartily, for it was more than two days since she had tasted food, and she knew that she could never succeed in making her escape without having her full strength and the possession of all her faculties. During the meal she was enlivened, if she was not entertained, by the constant chatter of old Tinnequa, who seemed never likely to grow weary of boasting of the greatness and superior personal qualities of her nephew.

"Melentha is a great warrior," she said, speaking in her broken English. "There is none like him in all the country. He is tall and strong, he is as straight as an arrow, his eye is like the eagle's, and his voice can be heard afar off. He is fiercer than the panther in battle, but will be as gentle as the pigeon to his wife. His enemies tremble when he speaks, and his warriors rush to follow him, but to his wife his voice will always be as tender and sweet as that of a singing-bird. He will fill her lodge with meat and all good things, and will keep her warm with furs. She shall not be made to work, and to carry bundles, and to cut wood, and to cook his meat, but she shall live in such style as suits the dignity of a chief's wife. Melentha is a great warrior, and he will one day be a great chief, as great as his father Wahnemogo, if not greater

He would never take a wife from among the young women of his tribe, for he never saw one that was good enough for him; but he says that the Thornless Rose is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen, and she may be glad that she is to be taken to the heart of such a great chief and such a great warrior, for there are no such braves as Melentha among the Long Knives."

This, and much more, said the old woman, in her garrulous and chattering way. The "Thornless Rose"—for such was the name that Melentha had already bestowed upon his intended bride—listened to it all, without assenting to what was said, or dissenting from it; but she listened patiently and even smilingly, as she perceived that this old woman was a person who must be conciliated.

When Lucy laid down at night upon her couch of furs, she thought that she might consider herself pleasantly and comfortably situated, if she was only among her friends, instead of being surrounded by ignorant and barbarous savages, and if she was relieved of her continual dread of the fate to which Melentha had destined her. As it was, her mind was crowded with fearful anticipations, and busied with all sorts of impossible plans for escape, and it was a long time before she fell asleep.

In the morning, when breakfast was over, her devoted and attentive lover, the young chief Melentha, came a-wooing in true savage style and splendor. His face, which would have been well enough looking if he had let it alone, or had only kept it clean, was covered with a coating of red clay, which had been streaked, by the hand of some native artist, with various lines and figures, making his countenance quite a cabinet of zoölogical pictures. His legs, otherwise naked, were covered up to the knee with fanciful leggings, richly ornamented, and adorned with dyed feathers. Over all he had put a swallow-tailed military coat, much too small for him, and had covered his head with an officer's cocked hat. Around his neck he wore several strings of wampum, to which was attached a pewter medal as large as a saucer.

Thus attired, he doubtless considered himself "the glass of fashion and the mold of form," for he held his body very erect as he walked through the village, followed by an admiring

crowd of children, and he strutted proudly as he entered the lodge of his aunt.

The old woman held up her hands, as if in amazement at so much beauty, and chattered volubly to Lucy, enlarging upon the fine appearance and excellent qualities of her nephew.

After standing up a little while, in order to give full effect to his figure and his dress, Melentha sat down, and proceeded with his courtship, through the medium of Tinnequa, who repeated his fine speeches and promises to the maiden, with a great many exaggerations and interpolations of her own.

Lucy constrained herself to listen with patience, and with as pleasant a countenance as she could assume, although her heart was filled with a terrible dread that these things might really be so, that what the chief told her might actually come to pass. She was determined, if it came to the worst, to put an end to her life, rather than submit to such an indignity. Nevertheless, pursuing her former policy, she neither assented to what was said, nor dissented from it, but was as smiling and gracious as if she accepted her position with gladness.

At the close of the interview, Melentha gave her to understand that within a short time he would claim her as his wife, and would take her, with all ceremony, and the greatest possible pomp, to a splendid lodge of his own, which he was about to erect. With this assurance, he strutted out of the lodge, leaving Lucy to her reflections and the ceaseless chatter of old Tinnequa.

Lucy was not long in discovering that her hostess and duenna was sorely afflicted with rheumatism. At times she was unable to stand or sit, but lay upon her couch of skins, groaning with agony, and cursing most heartily. All Lucy's endeavors to sooth her, or to alleviate her pain, were utterly unavailing, but the girl soon felt that she had reason to rejoice over Tinnequa's infirmity, for she was struck by an idea which she immediately acted upon.

She remembered that Sally Waitstill was skilled in the preparation and use of medicinal herbs, and that she had once cured her father of a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism, with which he had been afflicted for a long time. She thought that this would be an excellent opportunity to secure

the company of her friend occasionally, if she could not instate her as a permanent inmate of the lodge.

Accordingly she represented the case to the old woman, boasting of Sally's skill in the healing art, and especially enlarging upon her wonderful success in treating rheumatic diseases. When she had exhausted her eloquence in praises, she advised Tinnequa to send for Sally, and to herself under her care, assuring her that she would be entirely freed from her pains.

"Where is this medicine-woman to be found?" asked sufferer.

"She was captured by an ugly old man, who brought her here, and who took her with him. Melentha knows him, and he can find out where she is, and can make her come."

"It is a hard thing to do," answered Tinnequa, "for she belongs to that man, and he can do with her as he pleases; but, Melentha is a great chief, and he can make her come, if he will. Her master must let me have her for a little while, and Melentha must bring her to me."

When the young chief again visited the lodge Tinnequa preferred her request, describing her agonies and declaring that she must perish, and that she would be unable to assist him any more, unless something could be done to ease her pain.

Melentha frowned, and tried to put her off, telling her that she asked what was impossible, and that there were medicine-men and medicine-women in the village who could cure her if anybody could. But the old woman was excited by the wonderful stories that Lucy had told her concerning Sally Waitstill's great skill and unfailing success in such cases, and she was determined to have her way. She told him that unless he pleased her in this respect, as she knew he could, if he chose to, she would poison the mind of the Thornless Rose against him, so that she would never be a good wife to him.

Lucy added her smiles and frowns to Tinnequa's entreaties, and the young chief was badgered and coaxed until he consented, and went to seek Sally.

He returned with her in the course of half an hour, accompanied by her master, who was fretting and grumbling at

but again deprived of his white property. He made so many conditions and reservations, as to the time and manner of Sally's visits to her patient, that Tinnequa lost her temper, and scolded him so vigorously and vehemently as to make him run out of the reach of her tongue.

"That's the way I treat him when he gets into his cross moods," said Sally to her friend. "I cut his wood, and make his fires, and cook his meat, and do all the drudgery of his lodge, but he doesn't dare to treat me to any more of his tantrums, for he is afraid of my hand as well as of my tongue."

"I am glad to hear it," whispered Lucy, in reply, "for I was afraid that you were being abused and ill-treated, while I have been very comfortable in body, though sorely troubled in mind."

"Keep a good heart, and pray to God for deliverance. I believe that I have mastered my master pretty well, and that he is satisfied he caught a Tartar when he caught me. I am inclined to think that I could have got away from here before this if I had wanted to."

"Why did you not want to? You can't tell what they may make up their minds to do to you."

"You needn't fear for me, my dear girl, as I count myself able to take care of Sally Waitstill. I couldn't think of going away and leaving you here, and I won't do it, let come what may."

When Sally had examined her patient, she announced that she would be obliged to go into the woods to procure some herbs and roots, and she was allowed to do so, a young warrior being sent with her as a guard.

She returned with her apron full of simples, and made powerful lotion, with which she bathed the old woman's limbs, and then wrapped her up, making her drink copiously of some hot and bitter tea that she had prepared.

In a few moments Tinnequa dropped off into a profound sleep, and the two young women had the lodge to themselves. As it was the first chance for uninterrupted conversation that they had had since their capture, they opened their hearts to each other freely, and their talk ran, as a matter of course, on the subject of an escape.

"I believe I could find my way home, if we could get out of this village, and could keep clear of the Indians," said Sally. "Indeed, I am quite sure I could, for I noticed many things while I was rambling in the woods, by which I could tell what direction to take. The first thing is to get out of the village, and I think I have settled on the best course to take, though I have no idea how we will get a chance to take it."

"There seems to be scarcely any hope," replied Lucy. "I am watched whenever I step out of the door, and there is a guard at the lodge every night."

"Never fear, my dear girl, but keep on praying to God, and he will send deliverance in his own way. Has your red lover yet had the assurance to tell you when he means to make you his squaw?"

"He says that he intends to take me to his lodge in a short time."

"Very well. He may find that his plans won't work quite as easy as he thinks they will. We must do nothing rash unless there should be a real necessity for it, and then we will show them how smart and how desperate we can be."

After several hours of comforting intercourse, the two prisoners laid down, and fell asleep in each other's arms.

When Tinnequa's pains returned in the morning, Sally again soothed her with the lotion and quieted her with the draught. The old squaw was so greatly pleased at the relief she had experienced, that she declared her medicine-woman should remain with her until she was completely cured. When, therefore, Caughwecatigo came to look after her, he was sent away with a sound scolding, and the two young women were thankful enough for the privilege of enjoying each other's society.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SECOND CHAMPION.

THE week that had been allowed to Simon Crosswell, within which to complete his enterprise and return, had passed, and he had not come back to the settlement.

The day after the week closed there was a general assemblage of the inhabitants at the meeting-house, and Captain Simms presided and addressed them. The old man was very feeble, and seemed to be completely broken-down, so greatly was he changed from what he had been a month before. His pale cheeks were sunken, his step had lost all its elasticity, and there was a settled sadness in his eye, as if he sorrowed without hope.

"My friends and neighbors," said he, "I did not call you together to-day, but I well know why you have come here; and it is proper that I should speak without any reserve or pretended modesty. I know that you have come because you sympathize with me in my great misfortune, the loss of my daughter. We have heard nothing of her, and her fate is still uncertain, though we can all imagine what the intentions of the savages may have been. One brave and good man went out to attempt to rescue her, and he has not yet returned. We can not tell what his fate has been, but we may, doubtless, mourn for him as dead, and his death, in all probability, was a violent, if not a horrible one, for we know that the tender mercies of the savages, like those of all the wicked, are very cruel. When we last met to speak upon this subject, it was agreed—though I must say I consented to the arrangement with reluctance—that if Simon Crosswell should not return to the settlement within a week, another volunteer should be accepted for the same perilous enterprise. The week has passed, and he is not here, and the question now is, whether another effort shall be made, to be attended, there is too much reason to fear, with the same fatal result."

A general cry of "Yes! Yes!" mingled with various other

exclamations, drowned the voice of the speaker for a moment.

"I can not ask you to do any thing more," continued the captain, "as I have already trespassed too much upon your love; but I leave the matter in your hands and in the hands of God. As for myself, this great calamity presses upon me so heavily, that it is fast bearing me to my grave, and I can do nothing."

"I don't see that there is any use in making more words about it, sir," said Henry Denton, standing up in the audience. "When you called for volunteers before, I spoke next to Mr. Crosswell, and you said that I did. I suppose, then, that I have the right to consider myself the next man to go, and that I may set out as soon as I please."

"What you say is very true, and I can not gainsay it," replied Captain Simms. "You were named as the second volunteer, and if you choose to make the attempt, and are allowed to do so by your father, I have no objection to offer. You know well enough what a dangerous enterprise it is."

"I am of age, Captain Simms, and am my own master. If I was not, I don't think my father would try to hinder me from doing whatever I could for Lucy Simms. I won't make any promises, but I will do the best I can, and no man can do more than that. This matter being settled, I have nothing further to do here."

The meeting broke up, and young Denton walked out of the house with the rest.—At the door he was met by William Simms, who accosted him in a very insulting manner.

"So, Mr. blacksmith, you have got what you wanted, a chance to get shot and scalped or burned by the red-skins—for that is all *you* will make of it. You can't expect that *my* cousin would have you for a husband, if you should take her away from the Indians a dozen times, and I promise you that her father would not attempt to force her to do it. I tell you that whatever you may do will be of no use to you, and you had better consult your safety by remaining at home."

"You didn't talk that way, Will Simms, when Mr. Crosswell set out on the same errand," mildly replied Den-

"Simon Crosswell was a gentleman, but you—"

"Well, and what am I?"

"You're nothing but a blacksmith, and very far from being a gentleman."

"A gentleman, according to my notion, is a man who acts as such, as I always try to do, whether I succeed or not. In this country, Will Simms, one man has as good a right to make his way in the world as another, and I mean to stand upon my rights."

"I don't want to have any words with such as you. I only spoke to you for your own good, and you had better pay attention to what I said. If the red-skins don't take your scalp, I will."

"You ain't man enough to do that, Will Simms."

"Am I not? We'll see about that!" exclaimed Simms, as he drew his knife, and rushed upon the young blacksmith.

By a dextrous movement, Denton caught the hand that held the knife, and seized the other arm of his assailant, holding him as if in a vice.

"I don't want to hurt you, and I don't mean to do it," said he. "I wouldn't hurt any one of your name, if I could help it. Just now I have got other business to attend to, and I can't stop to quarrel. I want you to let me alone, or you might get hurt."

At that moment Captain Simms, who had heard the last words, came up to them, and stopped the controversy. Releasing his antagonist, and leaving him to make his peace with his uncle as well as he could, Denton walked away, and went to his father's shop.

He found the old man hard at work, as usual, but much excited concerning the intelligence, which he had just received, of his son's intended expedition.

"I am powerful glad that you have come to see me, my boy," said the blacksmith, as he laid down his hammer. "I was afeard you would be so eager to git away, that you would forget your old father."

"You know right well that there would be no danger of that," answered Henry. "Neither am I in such a great hurry that I mean to start before I am ready. Where is my

rifle? Have you done any thing with it since I left it with you?"

"Here she is, my boy. If she ain't fixed just as she ought to be, then old Tom Denton don't know his trade. I am ready to warrant that she will neither overshoot nor undershoot any more, but it wouldn't do any hurt to try her a little, afore you set out on such a hunt. So you are really going among the Injuns arter Lucy Simms, my boy?"

"Of course I am, father. You know I had the next chance, after Mr. Crosswell, and you may be sure that I was ready and glad enough to claim it."

"No doubt of that, my boy, for I know your feelin's toward that girl, close as you think you keep 'em. I suppose you know what a ticklish business it is, and that you can guess what has become of Simon Crosswell."

"I have no doubt that he has been murdered by the Indians. If he was taken prisoner I suppose he was tortured and burnt. But you wouldn't expect me to be frightened by that, father. Mr. Crosswell was a brave and a skillful man, but I think I am much cooler and more cautious than he was."

"I know that he couldn't be any braver than my own boy. It hurts me powerful bad to see you goin' on this business, Harry, for it seems as if you were rushin' right to your death; but I don't know of any arrand that I would be more willin' to send you on, and I know that you can bring the gal back, if it is in the power of any white man to do it. You must be keerful of yourself, my own boy. You mus'n't throw your life away, but must come back if you see that nothin' can be done, for you know that you are all that is left on this airth to your poor old father."

"You may rely upon it that I will be as careful as the circumstances will allow me to be, that I will take no risks that are not necessary to carry out what I am going to undertake."

"I heerd that thar was a sort of a skrimmage to day atween you and Will Simms. What was the matter?"

"It amounted to nothing, sir. I suppose he envied me because I had the next chance to go after Miss Lucy. He

drew his knife on me, but I held him so that he couldn't hurt me, and Captain Simms came up and stopped the trouble. He was very insulting to me, but I wouldn't let him fasten a quarrel upon me then."

"You had better look out for him, for I am afeard he has got bad blood ag'inst you in his heart, and it is bound to come out. He is a stout and brave enough chap, but I think he mought take mean advantages, if he should find fair meals to fail."

"I don't know what cause of complaint he can have against me, for I have never injured him in any way."

"I reckon I can see a little further into that mill-stone than you can, my boy, sharp as your eyes are; and it's my idea that Miss Lucy thinks more of you than she does of all the rest of the young men in the settlement together. Lord knows, thar's no reason why she shouldn't, though you are nothin' but a blacksmith's son. You may not see it, and she may not show it, or thinks she don't; but Will Simms sees it, and that's the reason he is so dead set ag'inst you. You never saw him act that way toward Simon Crosswell, or any of the other young fellers who made purlensions to Miss Lucy, but he is partic'lar spiteful to you. The fact is, Harry, that he is jealous of you, and you had better look out for him, for thar is sca'cely any meanness that won't come into a jealous man's head."

"I could never see that Miss Lucy favored me at all. She always treated me pretty much as she treated every body else."

"Lovers' eyesight is never good for much. I have noticed a power of things that p'inted the way I was speakin' of. But you mus'n't git your head full of such ideas at this time. Go out and try your rifle, my boy."

Henry Denton set up a mark, at which he shot several times, and declared that his rifle was perfect, that he would trust it to cut off the head of a wild turkey four times out of five. He then ate his supper, and went to bed, so that he might be prepared for an early start.

He set out at about the same hour that witnessed the leave-taking of Simon Crosswell, and was mounted, armed and provisioned, precisely as that unfortunate champion had been.

He was also, like Crosswell, strong, active, brave, and well skilled in woodcraft and Indian warfare; but there the resemblance ended, for Henry Denton added to these qualities a decree of caution and prudence that was unusual in one so young, and he felt—what was better than all—a trust in Providence, a reliance upon the God of the prisoner and the oppressed, that was calculated to encourage and sustain him through all difficulties and trials.

As he rode rapidly on his way, he reflected on what his father had said, with respect to William Simms' jealousy and its supposed cause. It was quite new to him, for though he had wished that Lucy might entertain some affection for him, and had even hoped that she might, he had not dared to consider such a thing as possible, but had felt himself doomed to gaze at her from a distance, as at a star that was placed far beyond his reach.

His heart beat high, as he thought that what his father had said, might possibly be true, and the actions of William Simms seemed to confirm it. He called to mind, also, the many little favors that she had bestowed upon him, and other marks of encouragement, which he had never before viewed as he now regarded them. His conclusion was, that it was possible she might look upon him with interest, if not with some degree of affection, and it was with a new hopefulness, a proud but thankful confidence, and a joyful anticipation of the future, that he quickened the speed of his horse as he pursued his journey.

When he reached the river, he left his horse in a thicket, as Crosswell had done, and, without waiting to make a raft, he tied his clothes and his rifle and equipments upon a log, and swam across. Knowing the precise location of the principal Indian village, around which he had scouted more than once, he did not need to pause to think, or to make any examinations, in order to ascertain the course that he should take, but pushed on, boldly but warily, until he reached the end of his journey, more than an hour before sunset.

Carefully and stealthily he worked his way toward the lodges, until he was in what might be called the outskirts of the village, when he concealed himself in a thick bunch of bushes behind a wigwam, and there waited and watched

His only fear was, that he might be discovered by some Indian dog, in which case he would be obliged to run for life.

All was quiet in the village, and it was evident that nothing unusual was transpiring or expected to transpire. Indian women were cutting wood, or pounding corn, or cooking, in front of their lodges, while their lords were lounging about, or smoking their pipes, serenely looking on at the labor of their household drudges.

Soon Denton saw a sight that made him start, and that sent the blood quickly from his heart to his face. From a lodge on the opposite side of the village came out Lucy Simms, accompanied by another young woman, in whom he recognized Sally Waitstill. Arm in arm they walked a short distance, followed by an Indian, and then returned into the lodge from which they had come.

The young man was overjoyed, for he now knew that Lucy was alive and well, and that she had a companion who was able to comfort and assist her if need be. He saw that he should be obliged to rescue two, if he rescued either, but he hardly thought of the difficulty of that, in his joy that the first point was gained, that he had learned that Lucy was alive and where she was kept.

The next thing was, to establish some kind of communication. For that purpose he made a wide circuit around the village, until he came behind the lodge which he had seen her enter. Then—his movements being partially covered by the approach of night—he cut a large green bush, with which he concealed himself, and edged his way, crawling on his hands and knees, to the rear of the lodge, where he could look through a chink in the planking, and plainly see what was going on within.

Again the blood rushed to his face, for he saw Lucy Simms and Sallie Waitstill, one engaged in mixing meal and water, and the other attending to a pot that was boiling over a fire. On a couch of skins sat an old Indian woman, who was chatting to them most volubly, in broken English. The lodge door was open, and a guard stood in front of it.

Denton heard enough of the old woman's talk to give him a pretty clear understanding of Lucy's position, and to satisfy him that it was the intention of the Indians to make her the

wife of one of their chiefs, as had been supposed at the settlement. Highly excited by this information, he was determined that nothing should stand in the way of his efforts to rescue her. At the same time he was cool and calm enough to perceive and admit that nothing could be done while the lodge was guarded, and while the old woman was there awake.

Fortunately he had a pencil in his pocket, with which he scrawled, upon a piece of birch-bark found close at hand, a brief message to Lucy, telling her that he was there and would be behind the lodge the next night, about three hours after dark. Could she contrive to get the old woman asleep and could she come out at that time to meet him? He then slipped the bark through the chink quietly, for he was fearful of attracting the attention of the old woman.

This done, he cautiously withdrew as he had come, and sought a secure cover, where he could refresh himself with food and sleep, as well as arrange his plans, for he was obliged to confess that he had not settled upon any mode of action.

He had not gone far through the woods when he was startled by a rustling and breaking of twigs, at some distance to his right. Supposing some other man was in the timber, and having no reason to believe that it might be a friend, he quickly stepped behind a tree, and cocked his rifle, to await further developments.

Hardly had he done so when he heard a sharp report, and a bullet whizzed by his head, so close that its wind felt like a cold streak on his brow.

The next instant there came a rattling discharge of guns, accompanied by Indian shouts and yells, so loud and so numerous that the forest seemed to be filled with his red enemies.

CHAPTER X.

THE THIRD CHAMPION.

WILLIAM SIMMS was greatly mortified at being discovered by his uncle, after his attack upon Henry Denton had been foiled, but he was destined to be still further mortified and humiliated, for Captain Simms took him to task quite severely.

"What does this mean?" asked the old man, in a tone of indignant and sorrowful reproof. "Why is it that you have been quarreling with young Denton? Can't you let him alone? What has he ever done to you, that you are all the time seeking to annoy him and persecute him?"

"I wanted to chastise him for his impudence and his presumption," moodily replied William.

"It seemed as if you would have received the chastisement yourself, if he had wished to inflict it, and you certainly can't boast of having gained a victory. Is that the way you attempt to punish your enemies—by rushing with a knife upon a man who has no weapon in his hand? If you had succeeded in your purpose, William, it would have been murder."

"He has no business to aggravate me as he does."

"As far as I have seen, the aggravation has all come from your side, and he has borne it very patiently. I am ashamed of you, and can hardly own you as my nephew. I knew that you always had a petulant temper and an overbearing disposition, but I never thought that I should have occasion to accuse you of being a coward."

"I am no coward, uncle, and you have no right to call me so," tartly replied the young man. "If you knew what a thorn in my side that fellow is, you would hardly blame me for showing some temper."

"I would always blame you for showing such temper. How is he a thorn in your side? What harm has he ever done you?"

"He is continually making pretensions to the favor of my cousin Lucy, and he has got the next chance to go to see

her, and now he looks and acts as if he was confident of bringing her home and making her his wife."

"How does that affect you?"

"I have always been taught to believe that she was to marry me, and I have regarded her as my future wife."

"Who has taught you to believe that? I have not, most assuredly, though it is an arrangement that would not displease me at all. At one time I had set my heart upon it, and hoped that you would prove worthy of her. I think she has not given you any more encouragement than she has given to other young men. If you continue to talk in that way, William, I shall begin to believe that you are jealous of young Denton, and with some cause."

"Of that low fellow?—that common blacksmith?"

"He is a good and worthy young man, and I must say that he is more valuable in the settlement than you are, for you do little but hunt, and he is employed in labor that is useful to us all."

"Would you allow him to marry Lucy, sir?"

"If she wished it, I am sure that I would have no objection to make. Besides, I have given my word that the man who brings back my child may claim her as his wife. I hope that young Denton may rescue her, and then he will have his reward if he wishes it."

"He shall never do it! If I don't get her, no other man shall!" was William Simms' mental exclamation.

"I only fear that the task is a hopeless one, and that he is going to his death," continued the old man. "Let me beg you, William, to lay aside your evil passions and your envious feelings, for this is not a time or a subject for their indulgence. Within a week we may have to lament the loss of another man, and it may be your turn to go in search of your cousin."

"If I wait till that time, I deserve to lose her," muttered the impatient young man, as he walked away. "But I don't intend to wait, and whoever thinks I will is very much mistaken. I won't submit to the dictation of any body, not even of my uncle. There is no good reason why I should not take my chance now, as well as at any other time, and I mean to do it. I will show uncle Martin that I am no coward, and I will save my cousin Lucy from the degradation of being

compelled to marry a boorish blacksmith. She might as well be in her grave, or live her life out among the Indians. If I don't get ahead of that fellow, by fair means or foul, I will call myself a fool for ever after."

In this unpleasant and very positive mood, William Simms went home, where he cleaned his rifle, put his other weapons in order, and laid in a supply of provisions. He also attended to the proper feeding and grooming of his horse, as if he intended to use him for some arduous work.

When he sat down to supper, at his uncle's table, his countenance was clear, frank and smiling, and his manner was unusually pleasant and agreeable. He acted as if he had entirely forgotten his passionate outbreak of the afternoon, and no allusion was made to it during the meal, Captain Simms being too much gratified by the change in his nephew's demeanor, to wish to introduce any disturbing subject.

Beneath this tranquil exterior, however, the young man hid a heart full of passion—full of "envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness"—and a firm determination to do what he had set his heart upon, in spite of advice or authority.

He went to bed at the usual hour, and in the usual way, but it was only for the purpose of blinding the eyes of his uncle, and of getting a little rest, for he fully determined to rise at about midnight, and to set out in search of his cousin, meaning thereby to be beforehand with Henry Denton, who, as he had ascertained, was not to start until morning.

But the fates were against him, and he was prevented from carrying out his design according to his intention. Either his supper had been too hearty, or he had eaten something that was calculated to produce sleep, or Providence had in some way interposed, for his slumbers were unusually heavy, and he did not awake until quite a late hour in the morning. It was with an exclamation of anger that he saw the first rays of the sun streaming in at the window, and heard his uncle calling him to breakfast.

"I have lost one chance already," he muttered, gloomily. "That fellow has got the start of me, for without doubt he set out before daylight this morning, and now it is an hour after sunrise. But it is not too late yet, for he is so very slow and cautious, that I can easily get ahead of him. I will

follow him, by ——, and then we will see which is the best man. If one way won't work, another will."

He dressed himself hastily, and went to breakfast, looking about as cross and ill-humored as he felt.

"What makes you so late this morning?" asked his uncle. "You look as if you had had bad dreams, or had got out of bed on the wrong side."

"I have had bad dreams," bitterly replied the young man. "I dreamed that I was chasing a deer, and that whenever I came within shot of it, it bounded away out of my reach."

"That must have been very annoying. I hope you are a better hunter when you are awake than when you are asleep."

"To prove that I am, I shall go hunting to-day, and I mean to bring home a fine deer when I return. I will either make a spoon or spoil a horn."

"That is right, William. When you attempt to do any thing, do it with your whole heart and strength."

After breakfast, William Simms mounted his horse, under the pretext of going to hunt, and set forth on the most important expedition of his life. As he went surreptitiously and without authority, he was not followed by good wishes and prayers, as Simon Crosswell and Henry Denton had been.

Neither were his thoughts as agreeable and animating as those that inspirited young Denton, when, a few hours before, he traveled the same road. While the blacksmith's son had been filled with hope by his father's words, with the hope that the star at which he loved to gaze might not really be so very far beyond his reach, Simms was cast down and indignant at what his uncle had said to him, and was disposed to quarrel with all the world. He had been taught that he must not consider his fair cousin as his absolute property, to be yielded up to him whenever he should see fit to claim her, and that his birth and position gave him no better chance than any other man in the settlement. He had also learned that Captain Simms was in earnest when he promised his daughter to the man who would rescue her from the savages, and that if he wished to have her, it would be necessary for him to win her. Knowing well that Denton could save her, if it was in the power of any man to do it, he saw that his

only hope of success lay in getting ahead of the young blacksmith—or in removing him from his path.

Besides all this, the way in which his uncle had spoken to him had strengthened his previous suspicions that Lucy did actually regard Denton with more favor than any of her other suitors, and that she would willingly become his wife, if he should be so fortunate as to bring her home in safety. Fired by this thought, Simms felt, for the first time, how strong his passion was for his cousin, and was sure that he could not bear to lose her. He resolved to gain her, or to yield up his life in the effort.

"By fair means or foul, she shall be mine," he muttered, between his set teeth. "If one way won't work another will. Any thing, rather than that she should belong to that upstart blacksmith. If I can't save her, I am determined that he shall not."

Filled with these dark and revengeful thoughts, he rode rapidly, and reached the river early in the afternoon. Hardly pausing to think, and only taking care to secure his rifle and ammunition from the water, he made his horse plunge at once into the stream, and guided him toward the other shore, cheering him with his voice and his touch. As the noble animal was an excellent swimmer, he succeeded, after a hard struggle, in reaching the other shore, where he climbed up with difficulty.

When he was safe across, Simms was obliged to tarry a while as his horse was too much exhausted to continue the journey immediately.

"Never mind, old fellow," said the young man as he stroked the neck of the splendid creature, "you will be well paid for this when Lucy sits on your back."

Again he mounted, and rode at a good pace, but more slowly and carefully than before. He was still so much excited, however, by the passions of love and hate, that he did not notice his course so closely as he should have done, and he soon lost his way. He had never been near the Indian village, in which his cousin was supposed to be a prisoner, and he had not taken the pains to inquire its location; consequently, he was doubly lost.

Cursing his thoughtlessness, he still pressed on, with his

rifle resting on the pommel of his saddle, and keeping a wary watch for enemies.

The sun had set, and darkness was fast closing down upon the earth, when he reached a part of the forest where there were occasional stumps of trees, some of which appeared to have been freshly cut. Judging from these indications that he was near some kind of a settlement, he dismounted, and picked his way more cautiously.

As he was peering anxiously through the trees, amid the gathering darkness, he caught sight of a man who was walking stealthily in the timber, at a little distance from him. A second glance assured him that the man was Henry Denton. The young blacksmith appeared to have heard him, for he quickly stepped to the cover of a tree, from behind which he cautiously looked out.

At once all the evil passions that Simms had been nourishing through the day swelled up in his breast with tenfold fury. Before him was the man who stood in his path, who had taken the chance which he so eagerly desired, and who, as he jealously suspected, had robbed him of the affection of his cousin. What could be easier than to put the presumptuous fellow out of the way in a moment, and to charge his death upon some outlying Indian?

The action speedily followed the thought. In such a spirit as must have actuated the first murderer, he raised his rifle to his shoulder, took a quick aim, and fired!

He had no time to ascertain whether his shot had been a successful one, for it was followed by the report of more than a dozen guns, and by a terrific chorus of Indian yells. The bullets cut the branches around him, and he felt, by a twinge in his left arm, that he was hit. He started to run, and put his legs to their utmost speed, but was again struck by a ball, which passed through and shattered both his hips. After another feeble effort, he sunk upon the ground and fainted.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO MORE CHAMPIONS.

THE evening of the day on which William Simms had made his unprovoked attack upon Henry Denton, witnessed an arrival at Simms' Settlement, which occasioned some excitement and no little curiosity, for it was seldom that the inhabitants of the little border village were treated to the sight of a stranger.

It was a double arrival, for there were two people who rode into the settlement at dusk that evening, an old man and a young one.

The old man was not a very old one, but he had evidently seen hard service, which gave him the appearance of being older than he was. He was tall, sinewy and vigorous, and his movements, on his horse and on the ground, showed that he was fully as athletic and nearly as active as any of the young men. His hair and beard were nearly gray, and his face was furrowed and browned by years and exposure, and marked by the scars of more than one desperate encounter. His kindly and good-humored countenance was expressive of great sagacity and penetration, and every wrinkle told of the experience of a veteran hunter and border man. He was dressed in a rough leather hunting-shirt, breeches and leggings, his head was covered with a fox-skin cap, and his feet were protected by moccasins.

His companion did not appear to be more than one or two years past his majority, and would have been very handsome, if his complexion had not been so brown, almost like that of an Indian. As it was, his face and his form were sufficiently striking to attract attention in any company, for he was as erect as a young cedar, and at the same time as lithe and graceful as a willow, while the fine lines of his bronzed countenance, the firmness of his well-cut lips, and the expressive flashes of his dark eyes, all speaking of a daring, intelligent and determined spirit, were enough to impress any beholder with admiration.

His resemblance to an Indian was increased by his black hair, which was straight, and was worn long, hanging down upon his shoulders. He was dressed in a stout woolen hunting-shirt, and was otherwise attired in the same fashion as his elder companion, except that he wore a woolen cap on his head, adorned with a military cockade.

The strangers were both mounted on fine horses and had with them a led horse, with packs on his back, as if they had made or were intending to make a long journey.

They stopped in front of the settlement store—which, being close to the block-house, had escaped the ravages of the Indians in the late attack—and were immediately surrounded by a number of the inhabitants.

"How are you strangers? Where do you come from?" asked John Debree, who, as one of the Board of Judges, took upon himself the office of spokesman.

"We are to'able stout and hearty, and we are from Lexin'ton last," answered the old man. "How are you all here?"

"We are all pretty well—those who are left. Did you fall in with any red-skins on the way?"

"We fell in with a few occasionally," replied the young man, with a keen sparkle in his eyes. "We fell out with some of them, too, and the rest of the falling, I believe, was done by them."

"You seem to be quite a wit, young man. You look powerful like an Indian yourself and I reckon, if you were dressed in a different style, that you would make a good decoy for them."

"I don't know but he is part Injun," said the elder traveler, with a merry glance at his young companion. "He knows thar ways to'able well, any how. Ain't this what is called Simms' Settlement, stranger?"

"You guessed right that time. What might your names be?"

"They mought be General Washington and Jeems Madison, but they ain't—not by a long shot. My name is Ben Smiles, and this young chap is commonly called Mart."

"I hope you mean to stay with us a while. We will make you as comfortable as we can, though we haven't got much

to brag of, since the red-skins came down on us the last time."

"This settlement looks as if it had seen a skirmish lately. What was the result of it?"

Nothing loth, John Debee related the story of the treaty with Wahnemogo, the treachery of the red-men, and the bloody combat in which the settlement had suffered so severely. When he spoke of the capture of Lucy Simms, the young man who was called Mart interrupted him rather abruptly.

"Do you say that Captain Simms lost a daughter in that fight?" he asked.

"Yes; she was carried off by the Indians."

"How old was she?"

"About eighteen, as near as I can judge."

"Was she good-looking?"

"Just as pretty as a picture, and prettier than any picture that I ever saw, and just as good as she was handsome. All the young fellows here were crazy after her, though she never seemed to take a particular notion to any one of them."

"Is Captain Simms alive?"

"Yes; but he is mightily broken down since that thing happened, and I am afraid he can't live long without his girl."

"Has any thing been done? Has any effort been made to rescue her?"

"As much as could be. The old captain made an offer that whoever would bring her back safely might have her for his wife, and that set all the young chaps on their heads; but he would let only one go at a time. One went a week ago and hasn't come back, and there can't be any doubt that the red skins have got his scalp. Another is to set out to-morrow morning on the same errand."

"The girl has been taken to some Indian village, of course. Can you tell us where she is supposed to be?"

John Debee described the locality of Wahnemogo's town as well as he could.

The young man drew his old companion aside, and spoke to him earnestly for a few moments. Then he returned to the group.

"We are going in that direction," said he, "and we may look around and see if any thing can be done for the girl. In fact, we mean to do so."

"Glad to hear it," answered Debee. "It can't do any hurt, for certain, and you two look as if you might be as good hands at such business as any body. Here is old Captain Simms himself, and he will be glad to hear of it, I reckon."

The father of the settlement approached the group, leaning on his staff, and was made acquainted with the strangers, and with the intention which they had just expressed.

"I hardly know whether to be glad or sorry," said he. "It is a perilous business, and I fear that it is a hopeless one. One good man has already been lost, and it is too much to ask of utter strangers to undertake such a task."

"We don't expect you to ask us, for we are glad to do it of our own accord," replied Mart.

"I could say nothing to hinder you, if I wished to. A young man is to start in the morning for the same purpose, and perhaps you would like to accompany him."

"We would prefer to do what we do on our own hook. We would neither like to interfere with him, nor be interfered with by him. We only ask that you, as you are the father of the lost girl, will give us your blessing before we go."

"May the blessing of Almighty God be upon you, and may He guard you and assist you in the dangerous task that you have undertaken!" said Captain Simms, in his most solemn tones, while Ben Smiles and Mart stood before him with bared heads.

The two strangers were earnestly pressed to partake of the hospitalities of the settlement, receiving numerous offers of supper and a bed; but they declined all invitations, saying that when they were on a scout they preferred to live as scouts. Accordingly, after replenishing their supply of powder and bullets, they withdrew to the forest, where they built a fire and cooked their supper, and then slept soundly in their blankets until dawn.

They were not in so great a hurry to set out on their expedition, that they were willing to forego their breakfast, but that was leisurely cooked and eaten, and they saddled their horses, and rode toward the west.

They were about an hour or so behind Henry Denton when they started, and about the same time ahead of William Simms; but they took a more northerly route than either of those young men, so that there was no meeting or crossing of trails.

They also rode more leisurely than either he who went before them, or he who followed them, and beguiled the way with conversation, of which the principal topic was the fate of Lucy Simms, and the possibility of rescuing her.

"I should like to git the gal," said Ben Smiles, "jest fur the good it would do that old man to set his eyes onto her ag'in. I make no doubt that we shall do it, onless the red-skins git scairt by the bunglin' of somebody else, and take her out of this part of the kentry."

"I don't know of any one whom I would trust to do such a job, sooner than you and me," replied his young companion.

"That's a fact, though we say it ourselves. Ef we do get the gal, Mart, I suppose you will be bound to marry her."

"Or you will," replied Mart, with a merry twinkle in his eyes.

"I don't know what somebody might say to your gettin' hitched out here."

"This is a serious subject, Ben," said the young man, with a sudden change of countenance. "We are going on a dangerous errand, and we should think of looking to God for help."

"True enough, my boy. You are allers right on that p'int, and I respect you fur it. I've been in many a hard scrape with you, Mart, but I was never so ready fur any kind of a scout as I am fur this 'un. Let's talk about huntin' b'ars."

Thus they conversed, until they reached the river, where the old man paused, and made a careful survey of the stream and of both banks.

"I've seen this river afore, Mart," said he, "and I reckon I know all the twists and turns of it. I was a prisoner among the red-skins here, a long time ago, though, perhaps, they wasn't the same people who hold out in this part of the kentry now. I know whar I am, my boy, jest as well as if I

had been huntin' in these parts durin' the past three months. The fust thing is, to git across the river."

"We can swim it easily enough," said Mart.

"True enough, but the p'int is, that we must provide fur a retreat, in case we have to make one. Then, ag'in, it's jest possible that we may have somebody to bring back with us--- somebody who can't swim quite as well as we and our horses can."

When the old man had selected a suitable spot, where the current set over to the other shore, the two friends went to work with their short axes, and soon constructed a raft, to which they entrusted themselves and their horses, after securing the pack-horse in a thicket, and soon ferried themselves over to the opposite shore.

They landed, and made their raft fast, just above a large old raft, which had probably been captured and abandoned by the Indians, and which was stranded at the bank.

"This will kinder hide our raft, my boy," said Ben Smiles, "and it may be useful to us. Thar's no tellin'."

Having climbed up the bank, they mounted their horses, and pushed on through the thick forest, the old man leading the way, as if he knew precisely the point at which they were aiming. Silently and warily they went, even the footfalls of their horses scarcely disturbing the quiet of the grand old woods, for they, as well as their riders, were veteran hunters and scouts.

As they had started at a late hour, and as they had traveled slowly, the end of the day soon overtook them; but they continued to press on carefully, until a low hiss from Ben Smiles brought them both to a sudden stand-still.

"Thar's the Injun village," said the old man, pointing through the trees.

"Where?" asked Mart.

"Don't you see that bit of smoke yonder, floatin' up above the tree-tops?"

Mart did see it, although it was so fine and so faint as to be perceptible only to the keenest vision.

"I was a blind-eyed stupid, not to see it before," he said.

"What shall we do now, Ben?"

"The fust thing is, to take keer of those horses, to put

them whar they'll be safe, and whar we can go right to 'em when we want 'em."

The horses, accordingly, were taken to a thick part of the timber, and tethered near a tall gum-tree, and the scouts pursued their way on foot, stealthily approaching the village, unti' another low hiss from the old man again caused Mart to halt.

"Do you see that chap yonder?" whispered Ben Smiles. "That is a white man, and he means to shoot at somebody or something. Thar it goes!"

As he spoke, the white man raised his rifle and fired. At the same instant, the scouts saw another white man start out from behind a tree in the direction of which the rifle had been aimed, and then there was a succession of shots, followed by Indian yells. The white man who had fired, started to run, but soon fell to the ground, and the other white man ran toward him.

CHAPTER XII.

A MEETING OF CHAMPIONS.

"THERE's suthin' wrong goin' on here. Thar's Injuns about, any how," said Ben Smiles, as he and his young friend cocked their rifles and took cover behind trees.

The white man who remained standing, as has been said, ran to him who had fallen, lifted him up on his shoulders, and hastened away with him into the forest. As he was a powerful man, he bore his burden with ease, and it seemed scarcely to impede his steps at all. The pack of savages came on, yelling and howling, without suspecting the presence of the two scouts, concealed behind their trees.

"Thar's goin' to be a skrimmage here, Mart, and we are in for it," said Ben Smiles, as he shot the foremost Indian. Mart brought down another, and the rest stopped for a few moments in doubt and dismay, probably thinking that they had fallen into an ambush.

The scouts quickly reloaded their rifles, while the old man shouted to Henry Denton—for it was he who was carrying off the wounded man—to bear to the right, as he would find horses there.

“Now, Mart,” said Ben, “send a bullet through one of those red rascals, and then run back toward the hosses, and take cover and load up. I will foller you in a minute or so.”

Mart did as he was told, and his companion soon followed his example, thus reducing the number of their enemies by two.

When the old man ran back, he took cover a short distance beyond his friend, who was by that time ready for another shot, which he delivered with effect, and sought another cover, still further in advance, where he reloaded, while Ben again put his mark on the nearest Indian.

The savages were evidently nonplused by this style of warfare, for they fired at random at first, and then made their advance very cautiously. They could form no estimate of the number of their adversaries, as they could not find them in the darkness, and as every advance was met by a bullet from a freshly-loaded rifle. Thus their onset was delayed, and time was gained for Denton to get out of the way, and for their real opponents to retreat gradually.

The scouts continued this running fight, until they reached their horses, where they found Denton, who had first fallen in with William Simms' horse. Upon that animal he had lifted the wounded man, had mounted it himself, and was riding away from the village, when he came to the place where the horses of Ben and Mart were tethered. There he halted and waited for the others to come up.

“I have found a horse,” he said, as the scouts stopped and reloaded their rifles. “Where are the Indians?”

“Jest behind us,” answered Ben Smiles. “Thar's no time fur talk. Here's your rifle—can you carry it?”

“I can carry it well enough. Thank you for picking it up. What shall I do now?”

“Foller me as fast as you can,” said Ben, as he mounted and led the way. “You bring up the rear, Mart, and keep your eyes open for red-skins.”

The old scout and Denton rode off, the latter holding the

wounded man before him on his horse, and Mart, after waiting to get another shot, which he did not fail to send to some purpose, followed and overtook them.

As none of the savages were mounted, the fugitives soon left even their yells behind, and then they rode more leisurely, until they reached a small ravine, closely shut in by a thicket of trees and undergrowth. A little brook trickled through the ravine, and near it, on the soft turf, they laid the wounded man, who was almost insensible from pain and loss of blood.

"I know this place like a schollard knows his book," said Ben Smiles. "It was here I hid when I got away from the Injuns that had me in these parts, and I'll defy the red-skins to find us, as long as we keep close. Suppose you look arter that feller who is shot, Mart, while I start a bit of a fire."

The old man quickly kindled a small fire, and his young companion, with skill and adroitness which showed an acquaintance with such cases, proceeded to examine the wounded man. He found that the shot which passed through both his hips had shattered the bones, and the bullet which struck his arm had entered his body, probably penetrating his lungs. He reported the result of his investigations to Ben Smiles, who shook his head gravely.

"I reckon the young feller has got to die, and it can't be helped," he said. "Those broken bones mought be mended, fur I knowed a man who was shot jest that way, up at the mouth of Lickin', many years ago, and he got well, and fit with us under St. Clair and Mad Anthony; but when a chunk of lead goes into what a feller breathes through, it leaves him a poor chance fur life. It's my opinion that the two shots are more than he can stand."

"Do you know him?" asked Mart of Denton, who was assisting him to dress the wounds.

"Yes; his name is William Simms."

"William Simms? Who is he, and where is he from?"

"He is the nephew of Captain Simms, of Simms' Settlement."

"Are you the young man who left the settlement this morning, to go in search of Captain Simms' daughter?"

"I am. My name is Henry Denton."

"Seems to me that you were mighty merciful and forgivin'

to risk your life to carry him off, arter he had shot at you" said Ben Smiles.

"Do you mean what you say? Did he shoot at me?"

"He sartinly did, fur he aimed percizely whar you was standin', and then he fired."

"I knew that a bullet came very close to my head, but I supposed the shot was fired by one of the Indians."

"Thar lies the man who sent it. He must have had a bitter grudge ag'inst you. Hadn't you better take your revenge out of him now, while you've got the chance? He may be out of your reach afore long."

"I have no revenge to take out of a wounded man. Besides, the Scripture tells us to love our enemies."

"That's the kind of doctrine that *you* preach up, Mart, but I didn't suppose that many other people believed in it. Scriptur' must have some queer talk into it. Fur my part, I never took the least bit of likin' to any of my inimies, 'specially to the red-skins."

"How did this man happen to be where you were?" asked Mart.

"I don't know," replied Denton. "He was to have the first chance to go after Lucy Simms, if I should not return within a week."

"And he couldn't wait until you got scalped and his turn came. Was he in love with the young lady, as well as you?"

"I haven't said that I was in love with her."

"But I have no doubt that you are. Was he troubled in the same way?"

"I believe that he always expected to marry her."

"Of course, then, he was jealous of you, and has been trying to git ahead of you. He must have thought that he had good cause for jealousy, or he would not have shot at you. It is plain that the Indians were on his trail, and not on yours or ours, and that they didn't know what to think of it when they heard the crack of our rifles."

"Where did you come from? How did you happen to be there?" asked Denton, in his turn.

"We reached Simms' Settlement last evening, and left it this morning. Our errand, I believe, is the same as yours; at least, we promised that we would look around and see what

could be done for the young lady. I hardly know whether it is good or bad luck to have met you."

Denton's countenance fell a little.

"I had hoped," said he, "to be able to get her out of the power of the Indians by myself; but I suppose they will be more on their guard now."

"Yes; they've been consid'able stirred up," remarked the old scout. "You will have to give the business up mostly into our hands now, young man, as I reckon we know more about red skins and their ways than you do. Mart and I can save the gal, ef it is in the power of any mortal white man to do it."

"What have you done so far, Mr. Denton?" asked Mart. "Have you seen her? Have you learned any thing about her?"

Denton briefly gave an account of his expedition to the village, and told how he had seen the two young women in the lodge with the old squaw, and about the message which he had written on a chip and left for them.

"She has a companion, then," said Mart. "What kind of a woman is *she*?"

"She is Sally Waitstill, who is well known in the settlement to be a smart girl—a little headstrong, perhaps, and with a mind of her own."

"That's the right sort of a woman to have near you in time of trouble. Can you direct me to the lodge in which they are kept?"

Denton described, as well as he could, old Tinnequa's lodge and its location.

"I think I can find it. At what time did you say you would be there?"

"To-morrow night, three hours after dark."

"That is not very definite, but it will do. Had you formed any plan for getting them clear of the village?"

"Not yet."

"And you had no horse to carry them?"

"I left my horse on the other side of the river."

"That was bad. Now, if you please, you may help me wrap this wounded man up in my blanket."

William Simms, who remained in an almost insensible

condition, was carefully wrapped up, and was laid near the fire in as comfortable a position as was possible, and then Ben Smiles took his rifle, and rose to leave.

"I'm goin' to do a little scoutin', about whar we had the skrimmage," said he. "P'raps I mought pick up a scalp, and p'raps I mought pick up suthin' else. This is a tol'able safe place, Mart, but I reckon it won't do any hurt to keep up a watch."

With this parting admonition the old man left them. Mart told Denton to lie down and sleep, while he kept guard over the little encampment. There was no change to be perceived in the wounded man during the night, but he lay as if in a stupor, breathing with difficulty, and groaning occasionally.

It was not until near daylight that Ben Smiles returned, and then he brought with him the full dress and equipments of an Indian warrior, which he threw on the ground near the fire.

"The red-skins had carried off all the men we dropped except one," said he, "and that one was hid in the bushes, whar he fell. Arter I had looked around, and had seen that they were kinder quieted down, I thought I would lift that feller's scalp and git his things. Thar's his clothes, Mart, and I reckon they'll fit you, ef thar's any fit to 'em."

Mart stripped off a portion of his clothing, and put on the apparel of the slain Indian. He was so completely transformed when Denton awoke, that the young blacksmith started up and reached for his rifle, thinking that there was an enemy in the camp.

"That's tol'able good," said Ben Smiles, with a laugh. "Kinder startled you, didn't it, young man? Well, Mart, I'm blessed ef you don't look more like a red-skin than a red-skin himself. You'd pass for a Mingo any whar, ef you had the Mingo paint."

"I can soon fix that," said the young scout, as he took from his pockets some lampblack and some yellow ocher, with which he proceeded to bedaub his face and breast.

"You'll do, my boy. How is that chap who went a-shootin' and got shot?"

"He is no better, and I think he is failing a little," answered Denton.

"I don't want to say any thin' that mought sound onhuman, but ef he is goin' to die, I wish he'd get through with it afore night, so's we can have a good chance to work. Come, Mart, let's git some breakfast. I am as hungry as a wolf in winter time. The sun will be showin' his face afore long, too, and then we will have to be done with fires."

After stirring up and replenishing the fire, they broiled some fried meat on the coals, and baked some corn-cakes in the ashes, on which all, with the exception of the wounded man, made a hearty breakfast.

Mart attended to William Simms' wounds, and then rolled himself up in his blanket and laid down to take a nap. Like a veteran hunter, he went to sleep directly, and he did not awake until noon, when he took his rifle and went to reconnoiter the Indian village. Denton wished to accompany him, but was not permitted to do so.

"Your friend is a singular person," he said to Ben Smiles, after Mart had gone. "He looks exactly like an Indian."

"He ought to," grunted the scout, "fur he has lived among 'em long enough."

"Do you suppose, if he should rescue Lucy Simms, that he would want to marry her?"

"Wal—ya-as—I reckon he'd be bound to, 'cordin' to the contrack—either he or I," replied Ben, with a queer chuckle.

"I more than half wish that I hadn't met you."

"Then you'd have been killed and scalped afore this. Don't git downhearted about it, young man, for what must be has got to be, and you'll have to give up this business mostly into our hands, as I told you. Why, bless your soul! you ain't more'n a suckin' fawn, in such business, alongside of Mart. He knows every thin' that an Injun is up to."

Denton had nothing more to say, but was quite downcast during the remainder of the day, keeping by the side of William Simms, and taking such care of the wounded man as he could.

It was near sunset when Mart returned. In answer to the inquiries of his companions, he said that every thing was quiet in the village, except that the Indians appeared to be making

preparations for some festival or celebration. He had seen one of the ladies—he did not know which—at a distance, but had not ventured in among the lodges to speak to her, deferring that business until night, when his disguise would be aided by the darkness.

Supper was eaten, and the party prepared to leave the ravine, when a discussion arose as to what should be done with William Simms, who was yet alive.

“It’s no use talkin’,” said Ben Smiles. “He’s past savin’ fur sartin, and thar’s two others that we may save. We’ve got to leave him here, but we’ll come back to him ef we can.”

This seemed cruel, but there was no help for it, and the three men mounted their horses, and cautiously rode to the gum tree at which the halt of the previous evening had been made. There they directed Denton to remain and take care of the horses, while they went into the village.

The young blacksmith objected to this arrangement, naturally enough; but he was plainly told that if he wished the prisoners to be rescued, he must obey orders, and the two scouts left him to his reflections.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAPTIVES' HOPE.

LUCY SIMMS got along quite comfortably, and was somewhat easier in her mind after she had secured the society of her friend, Sally Waitstill; but she was yet ill at ease, and filled with fearful forebodings of the future. The intentions of Melantha were very plainly expressed, and she could only hope that he would not be in a hurry to carry them out, so that she and Sally might form a plan of escape, or that Providence might in some way interpose and effect their release.

Sally, on the contrary, was quite stout-hearted and cheerful, partly because of her natural habit of self-reliance, and partly

because she desired to keep up the spirits of her friend. It was to be noticed, however, that her prayers were more fervent than formerly, and that the pressure of her hand and the tone of her voice were warmer and more affectionate than Lucy had ever known them to be.

Sally had been but two days an inmate, with Lucy, of old Tinnequa's lodge, when they heard a great shouting and yelling, and perceived that the village was in a state of general commotion.

The old woman called in an Indian to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, and was informed that a white man had been captured, in the act of attempting to steal the favorite child of the great chief, Wahnemogo, and that he was about to be put to the ordeal of the gantlet.

Tinnequa groaned and lamented because her rheumatism would not allow her to go out and view the interesting spectacle, and the two young women listened, in fear and trembling, to the shouts and laughter of the savages, big and little, male and female, which announced the commencement and continuation of the exciting sport.

After a while there was a period of comparative silence, and then Tinnequa's friend came in and informed her that the white man had succeeded in running the gantlet without losing his life, but they were to have the pleasure of burning him in the morning.

Lucy and her friend could of course do nothing to aid the unfortunate captive, but they prayed for him when they laid down to rest, and they prayed for themselves more earnestly than ever.

The next morning, while the yells and savage cries of the red-men gave token too plainly that the prisoner was undergoing the torture of fire, there came into the lodge two warriors, who seized both the girls, and dragged them out doors, where they hurried them to the place of execution in front of the council-house, at which place they compelled them to stand, and pointed out the horrible sight to them, exultingly shouting in their ears some Indian words which, happily, they did not understand.

Lucy saw a tall and stout post, to which was tied a man who was surrounded by fire and was walking on fire, in whom

at the first glance, although his face and body were painted black, and though he was terribly disfigured, she recognized Simon Crosswell.

He saw her, and called to her, but the sight was too sickening for her to bear, and words would have failed her, if she had attempted to utter them. She covered her face with her hands, and would have fallen to the ground, if she had not been supported by her friend.

At that moment Melentha came to where they were, and led the girls back to their lodge, after sharply reproving the young men who had brought them out. Lucy was so sorrowful and agitated during the remainder of the day, that she could hardly speak or hold up her head.

At night, when she laid down to sleep with Sally, her friend whispered to her, and asked her if she knew why Simon Crosswell had ventured to the village, where he was captured.

"We were told," she answered, "that he was attempting to steal the chief's child, and to kill its nurse."

"Yes; but why was he attempting to do it?"

Lucy protested that she did not know.

"It seems very plain to me," said Sally. "Simon Crosswell was one of your lovers, was he not?"

"I believe he was."

"He came here for the purpose of rescuing you, and he thought that if he could steal the chief's child he might exchange it for you."

"I hope not," sobbed Lucy.

"I have no doubt, if the truth could be known, it would be found that that was what he meant to do. You have more lovers, my dear, and I should not be at all surprised if some of them were now in the woods near us. If they ever suspect that you are here, they will make every possible effort to release you."

"I hardly dare to hope that they will, for it seems like rushing uselessly into the lion's den, like dooming themselves to a horrible death to no purpose. It frightens me to think of the fate of poor Crosswell. Oh, Sally, I almost fear that God has forsaken me. It is a terrible thing to be such a prisoner as I am, to dread my own fate continually, and to

feel that my friends may be risking their lives in hopeless efforts to save me from it."

"Let us pray, Lucy."

The next night Sally Waitstill again whispered to her friend in confidence.

"Do you know," she said, "that our old squaw is getting well, entirely too fast?"

"I have noticed that she is improving rapidly, and that her pains have nearly left her," answered Lucy.

"She is improving much too rapidly, and I must change my mode of treatment or she will soon be well, and then she will turn me out of doors and send me to my ugly and cross old master."

"That must never be, for I believe I could not exist without you now."

"I must give her a relapse, for she will certainly discard me when she thinks that she can get along without me."

So Sally weakened the old woman's lotion, and changed the nature of her hot draught, until the rheumatic pains came back in full force, and Tinnequa besought her to employ some more powerful remedies. Then she eased the tormenting aches by resuming her former practice, and in that manner kept the hag in such a condition that she would not have parted with her medicine-woman on any terms.

Thus time passed with the two captives, almost as rapidly as with a criminal whose day of execution has been fixed. Melentha, adorned with his barbaric finery, paid regular visits to the lodge, and pursued his courtship in the same style in which it had been commenced, showering upon Lucy, through the medium of Tinnequa, a profusion of extravagant compliments, and congratulating her on her expected promotion to the dignity of the wife of a great chief. To all this she constrained herself to listen quite graciously, and the young chief strutted more proudly after each visit. He was unremitting in his attentions to her, supplying the lodge with game and with all the delicacies that the Indian larder afforded, and conducted himself, in all respects, more like a devoted lover than a savage master.

Melentha, in the mean time, was also building a lodge for the reception of his bride, and for his own future residence.

He had employed Sam Steele, the renegade white man, as the architect of this palatial establishment, and had given him *carte blanche* to build the finest wigwam that could be made for love or wampum. The lodge progressed rapidly, under the eye of the chief, and Melentha soon had the proud satisfaction of boasting about it to Lucy, and of informing her that it would be finished and furnished in a day or two, when she should be duly installed as its mistress.

The poor girl received this announcement with shuddering and great dismay, for it caused her to realize her unhappy situation more forcibly than ever. As soon as she could talk freely with Sally, she opened her heart to her friend, moaning and sobbing bitterly.

The same day Sally received permission to make a visit to her old master, and went to his lodge, followed by an Indian guard. When she returned, she brought with her a bundle of clothing, which she concealed under her couch of furs.

"I think I have hit on a plan," she whispered to Lucy, "and we will try it to-night, if nothing should occur to prevent us. I have stolen an Indian woman's clothes for you, and I think we can disguise ourselves pretty well."

"But what will you do for a disguise?" asked Lucy.

"I will take some of old Tinnequa's things, which will answer my purpose."

The two girls paid particular attention to the cooking that evening, as they wished to eat a substantial supper, and to prepare some provisions for the future, as they might be in the woods two or three days, if they should succeed in making their escape. The old squaw was unusually wakeful, chattering to and at them with her greatest volubility; Lucy was so anxious and nervous that she was continually making mistakes in her work; but Sally Waitstill, sedate and grave, with her countenance expressive of a settled determination, paid strict attention to her cookery and to answering such questions as the old woman occasionally addressed to her. At the same time her ears were sufficiently unemployed to perceive a slight noise at the rear of the lodge, and her eyes found opportunity to take note of a little occurrence that made her heart bound.

At last Tinnequa finished her supper and fell asleep, and then Sally quickly stepped back and picked up a little piece

of bark which she brought to the fire. There was writing on it, which she read in an excited whisper, and then she handed the little slip of wood to her friend.

"It is from Henry Denton!" joyfully exclaimed Lucy. "He has come to save us, and is near us now. This is indeed providential, Sally. It is an answer to our prayers."

"He has come at the right time," replied Sally. "I don't know of any man in the settlement with whom I would rather trust you than with Henry Denton. But I am almost sorry that the attempt must be put off until to-morrow night, for I had made up my mind to it."

"We must do as he says, for he knows how to act better than we do. He tells us to slip out at night and meet him. I know that you can put the old woman to sleep, but how can we pass the guard at the door?"

"Do you see that instrument?" said Sally, pointing to an ax that lay on the floor. "I can use it if need be. Now let us give thanks to God, and go to sleep."

They had hardly finished their prayers, when they were aroused by rapid discharges of guns, accompanied by the yelling of Indians.

"They have found him, and they will murder him!" exclaimed Lucy. "Oh, Sally, this is too horrible!"

"Wait!" answered her true friend, folding the afflicted girl in her arms. "Harry Denton is too good a woodsman to be easily caught."

After a while the firing and yelling ceased, and all was quiet in and about the village.

"I verily believe that he is safe," said Sally, with a sigh of relief. "If they had caught him, or if they had killed him, my dear, they would have had a great rejoicing over it; but there has been nothing of the kind."

Thus she soothed and comforted her friend, until both fell asleep.

The next day Melentha visited the lodge, strutting more lordly than ever. After his usual compliments and boastful self-adulations, he informed Lucy that his splendid lodge was completed and ready for her, and that on the morrow there would be a grand festival, during which he would lead her in triumph to her new home. Lucy was unusually gracious and

complaisant, and he went away in a state of complete satisfaction with himself and the world in general.

When he had left, however, she gave way to her fears and excitement, so that it was difficult for Sally to quiet her.

"It has come to the worst," she whispered. "We have no time to lose now."

"If Denton doesn't come as he promised to, we will make the attempt by ourselves," calmly replied her friend.

All went on as usual in the lodge, until a little after dusk, when Sally Waitstill went to the spring, partly to get some water, and partly to see what was going on in the village. As usual, she was followed, at a short distance, by a savage.

Before she reached the spring, she was approached by another Indian, who joined her, and walked by her side. When she commenced to dip up the water, he spoke to her.

"Are you Lucy Simms?" he asked, in a low tone, and in pure English.

"No," answered Sally, with a sudden start, that spilled all the water she had dipped up. "Who are you? You are not Henry Denton?"

"I am his friend. He is not far from here. Don't stop dipping up the water. Do you know Lucy Simms?"

"I was taken prisoner with her, and we stay in the same lodge."

"Then you are Sally Waitstill, and I am glad I have met you. Does that old woman sleep sound?"

"I can make her sleep so sound that she will not wake up for hours."

"Do so. Can you get some of her clothes, to throw over yourself and Lucy?"

"I have every thing of that kind. But there is always a guard at the door of the lodge."

"He shall be taken care of. How soon can you be ready?"

"Within half an hour."

"I shall not come as soon as that, but you may expect me when all is quiet. Can you point out the lodge to me, without being noticed by that fellow yonder?"

"Please to tell me who you are," said Sally, as she carelessly extended her arm in the direction of Tinnequa's lodge.

"You may call me Mart, if you wish to give me a name. Be vigilant and careful, and don't trouble yourself about the guard."

Sally hastened to the lodge with the water, eager to impart her joyful tidings to Lucy, and the pretended Indian, after sauntering about a few moments, walked away and disappeared in the forest.

CHAPTER XIV.

ESCAPE AND PURSUIT.

WHEN Mart returned to the rendezvous in the forest, he found Ben Smiles and Denton waiting for him there, and he at once related what he had seen and heard, giving the particulars of his interview with Sally Waitstill.

"What do you intend to do?" anxiously inquired Denton.

"We propose, in the first place, to take the two women out of that Indian village, and to bring them here. You must stay by the horses, Denton, and be ready to start at any moment. For the present, we must keep quiet."

Two hours passed, when Mart started for the village, followed by Ben Smiles.

All was quiet about the lodges, except the occasional barking of dogs, and the young man, as he sauntered leisurely among them, saw no one but the warrior who stood guard over Lucy's prison. Approaching this savage, Mart asked him for some tobacco. The man handed him his pouch, from which Mart filled his pipe. He then lit it, and handed back the pouch.

As he did so, Ben Smiles, who had been concealed by the lodge, crept up, and knocked down the warrior with a blow that might have felled an ox. The next instant he plunged his knife into the prostrate sentinel.

Mart immediately entered the lodge, where old Tinnequa was lying down, wrapped in a profound slumber, and Lucy and Sally were seated, attired in their Indian dresses.

"I suppose you are ready," said he. "Come with me, and step quickly and lightly."

He led the captives out around the lodge, and across the cleared ground to the edge of the forest, where he found Ben waiting for him, and all made their way rapidly to the rendezvous. Lucy gave a joyful cry of recognition as she saw Henry Denton holding the horses, and he greeted her most heartily.

Mart caused Lucy to get on his horse in front of him, Denton took Sally Waitstill in the same way, and they set out through the darkness and the thick forest, Ben Smiles leading.

They had not gone far, when they were startled by shouts and yells, proceeding from the direction of the village. The clamor was so great, that it seemed as if all the Indian population were aroused and were screeching together.

"One of their dogs has found the fellow that you left your mark upon, Ben," said Mart. "Do you think you can keep clear of them?"

"Leave me alone for that, my boy," answered the old scout. "I wasn't a prisoner in these parts fur nothin'."

Turning suddenly to the left, their guide led them on at a more rapid rate, away from the distant shouts of the savages, which seemed to be spreading out from the village in all directions. After riding about a mile further, they came to a stream, which was broad, but not deep. Ben Smiles entered it, followed by the others, and proceeded up its bed for a considerable distance. Then he went into the forest again, and made another turn, as if he meant to go back to the village; but he had not proceeded far in that direction when he altered his course and rode off toward the south.

The shouts of the Indians, which had been all the time growing fainter, soon died away, and were heard no more.

"The red rascals have gone to the river to head us off, but they won't find us thar'," said old Ben. "Not even thar dogs could smell us out now."

The scout led the way quite confidently, without appearing to notice his course, and the party soon found themselves in the ravine where William Simms had been left.

"Now we may count ourselves safe, and we may stay here

until we git ready to leave," said Ben, as he dismounted and tethered his horse. "I wonder if that wounded feller is alive yet."

A light blaze was soon kindled, and Lucy and Sally went to view the wounded man, with looks of curiosity and wonder, which quickly changed to surprise and dismay, as they recognized the pale features of William Simms.

"What is the matter with him?" eagerly asked Lucy. "How did he come here? Is he badly hurt?"

"He was shot by the Injuns, last night, while he was doin' some shootin' of his own," replied Ben Smiles. "I reckon he's hurt about as bad as a man can be who has his biggest bones broke, and is shot through his breathin' arrangements."

"Can nothing be done for him?"

"I reckon he's past all help. The only wonder is, that he is livin' yet."

William Simms appeared to recognize Lucy's voice, for he raised his head and looked at her.

"Is that you, Lucy?—safe?"—he said, in a feeble tone. "Come here to me. Harry Denton, come here."

Both went to his side, and Lucy took his hand.

"Come closer; I can't see well. Harry Denton, can you forgive me?"

"I have forgiven you, and I pray that God may forgive you," answered the young blacksmith, with emotion.

"Thank you. And Lucy is safe. Then all is over."

All was over with him, indeed, for his head fell back, and in a few minutes a rattle in his throat told that he had breathed his last.

Denton gently led Lucy away from the dead man, who was then wrapped in his blanket, and carefully laid under the shelter of some bushes.

Mart stripped off his Indian garb, washed the paint from his face, and combed his long, black hair, when Lucy was compelled to admit that he was a very good-looking and presentable young man.

Ben Smiles then told the girls that they must stop talking and thinking, and must go to sleep. Blankets were spread for them on the soft turf under the trees, and they obeyed his command.

"Are you staying here?" asked Denton. "It seems that we ought to be getting out of this country and leaving as soon as possible."

"That's just what we ought not to do, young man," replied Ben Smiles. "The Injuns have gone to the river to head us off, and the best thing we can do is to stay here until they get settled down and think that we have gone out of their reach."

Denton laid down to sleep, while Mart kept watch, and Ben Smiles dug a grave, in which the body of William Simms was properly buried before the girls awoke.

Lucy and her friend slept well and securely through the night, and in the morning they were only troubled by thoughts of the sad fate of William Simms, the cause of which had not been explained to them.

After breakfast, Ben Smiles left them to reconnoiter and scout along the way to the river. Mart did his best to entertain the young ladies and to make them feel at ease, but Denton was gloomy and downcast during the entire day. The fact was, that he was thinking of the reward that Captain Simms had offered for the safe return of his daughter, and was wishing that he had been the chief instrument in effecting her rescue, instead of Ben Smiles and his young friend.

An hour or so before sunset Ben Smiles returned, and informed them that the way to the river seemed to be clear, and that it was time to set out.

Accordingly they mounted their horses, Mart taking Lucy up before him, and promising her that she should have a horse of her own when they crossed the river. Denton rode William Simms' horse, and took Sally as his companion, for, much as he objected to the arrangement, he felt that he had no right to protest against it.

Ben Smiles acted as guide, and they reached the river without any difficulty, striking it a little above the place where the two scouts had left their raft. There they halted while Ben went up, and Mart down the bank, for the purpose of reconnoitering, and to ascertain whether there was any danger of their being molested while crossing.

The young man was the last to return, bringing the information that a number of Indians were collected on the bank,

a short distance below them. Although then quite dark, with only occasional gleams of moonlight, the presence of their foes was a danger not to be despised.

"I will fix 'em," said Ben Smiles. "I will give 'em some thin' to smell."

He towed the small raft a little way up the river to a point where the current set almost directly across to the other side, and then returned to the large old raft. On this, with the assistance of of Denton and Mart, he soon constructed a sort of close house of bushes, at one end of which he hung up Sally Waitstill's shawl, to make it appear as if a woman was sitting within. Then he pressed Denton's coat and hat into the service, telling him that he could get some others when he reached home. The coat he stuffed with leaves and grass, fastened the hat atop of it, and fixed it as if in a sitting position, near what might be called the stern of the raft. He completed his preparations by rigging a steering-oar, to the handle of which he tied the stuffed sleeve of the coat. Then the old raft was shoved off by the united exertions of the three men.

"As I told you afore, Mart, I know all the twists and turns of this here river," said the old man, surveying his work with an air of satisfaction. "That raft will move straight down fur a bit, then it will go almost over to the other side, and then is will wind in to this side ag'in, near whar those Injuns are, and I'll have 'em around it as thick as a swarm of bees on a cedar bough."

Having set this decoy afloat, all hastened up to the other raft. They took the ladies on board, and led their horses into the water, to swim after the raft. Then they started to cross the river, the two scouts "pulling" and steering with the cross-current, while Denton and Sally Waitstill held the horses.

The old man's stratagem was entirely successful, and the result verified his predictions as to the course of the large raft. It was, ere long, discovered by the Indians, who shouted joyfully as they fired upon it and chased it down the river. They continued this harmless warfare for some time, until it became evident that they had boarded the decoy and discovered the imposture, for their joyful shouts were changed to cries of disappointment and indignation.

The smaller raft, aided by the current, soon reached the opposite shore, when the women were assisted up the bank, and the men scrambled up after them with their horses.

Mart immediately went to a thicket and brought out the pack-horse which had been left there, threw off the packs, and mounted Sally Waitstill upon it, telling Lucy that she would still be obliged to ride with him.

"I think she won't," said Denton, "for I left my horse near this place, and I hope he is there yet."

The young blacksmith ran off, and soon returned with his horse. Lucy Simms was placed on the horse that had belonged to her cousin, and then, all being mounted, they set out at a quick pace toward Simms' Settlement.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

THE fugitives had not mounted their horses any too soon, for the savages, finding out the trick played upon them, had discovered the fugitives as they climbed up the bank. With yells of surprise and vengeance they began to cross the river, by swimming.

The whites had gone but a little way, when the Indians appeared on the bank, and those who were mounted pressed on in hot haste after the fugitives.

This was too much for such veteran scouts as Ben Smiles and Mart to stand without making some show of resistance. Accordingly, they told the others to ride on, while they waited until the foremost red-men came within range. Then they took good aim and fired, not at their enemies, but at their horses.

The shots were successful, for the two horses tumbled over with their riders, and the scouts galloped on until they overtook their companions, loading their rifles as they went, and laughing heartily at the success of their strategy.

Again they waited for the advance of the Indians to come

up; again they coolly shot down two more of their horses regardless of the bullets that were sent at them at random, and again they galloped away gleefully.

This sort of fighting was kept up for a distance of several miles, until the number of riders among the Indians was reduced to three, who were careful to keep at a safe distance from those unerring rifles. Then the scouts rode forward to their companions, and told them that they were out of danger, and that they might travel as leisurely as they wished.

Lucy Simms and Denton, in the mean time, had been holding a conversation which was very interesting to both, although it seemed to have a saddening effect upon the young man.

Lucy was anxious to know how her father had felt, and what he had done, when it was discovered that she had been carried off as a prisoner. Denton described to her, as well as he could, how sorely Captain Simms was troubled, and how completely he was broken down, by the loss of his daughter. He was obliged, in order to complete the description, to relate the particulars of the gathering of the young men at the meeting-house, the promise that Captain Simms had made to the young man who would rescue his daughter, the call for volunteers, and the response to that call.

"It was a dangerous enterprise, and the reward is surely a poor one," said Lucy. "I have a little curiosity to know who I am to belong to, according to my father's arrangement. Our friends behind us—were *they* included in the offer?"

"I suppose they were, though they were out of their turn. I had the next chance after Simon Crosswell, and your cousin was to come after me."

"Then he was out of his turn also. How did he happen to get shot?"

By dint of close questioning, Lucy extracted from Denton an account of William Simms' proceedings, as far as he knew them.

"And so you risked your life to save a man who had sought to kill you," said Lucy, with a look of admiration, in which much emotion was mingled.

"I suppose I would not have escaped if it had not been for those other men," replied Denton. "It is certain that they are the men who really saved you. I wish it had been me!" he concluded, in a choking voice.

"I wish it *had* been you, Henry Denton," replied Lucy, with a deep blush, and with downcast eyes.

The young man turned upon her a look full of blended joy and sorrow, love and suffering; but, what might have been said further must remain untold, for Mart rode up at that moment to inform them that they must ride faster, as the Indians were still in pursuit. Some hard riding was then done, by which the savages were distanced, and the settlement was reached in safety. The vigilant sentinels detected their approach, and the gates were quickly opened to receive the welcome party. That they were greeted with the greatest joy and thanksgiving we may well surmise.

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, every body was anxious to hear the story of the escape. All the particulars were given, by the several actors, and the two scouts were overwhelmed with praises.

Captain Simms, after every thing was made known, appeared to be uneasy and greatly troubled, and he soon declared the cause of his perplexity.

"I presume you all know," said he, "the promise I made—that the man who would bring back my daughter might have her for his wife. I hardly know what ought to be done about it now."

"I reckon that young chap deserves her, ef any body does," said Ben Smiles, pointing to Denton. "He did as much as any body could do—'ceptin' Mart and I—and he resked himself to carry off the man who had shot at him."

"But you and your friend seem to have the best claim, and she can't be divided. I must ask you, as you are the oldest, if you wish to take her?"

"Wa-al, raally," answered the old man, scratching his head, and actually blushing, "you see I'm gittin' too old fur that sort of thing, cap'n, and I'm bound to say that I never got into the marryin' way. I reckon the gal won't take no offense ef I leave her to Mart."

"For my part," said the young scout, "I am sorry to say that I have two objections to make. The first is that I have a blue-eyed wife and a black-eyed baby in Lexington. The second is, that it is neither lawful nor right for a man to marry his own sister."

"His sister!" exclaimed Captain Simms. "What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean that my name is Martin Simms, junior, and that Lucy is my sister. I escaped from the Indians a few years ago, and did not know that you were living, until I heard that you were at this settlement, and then I came to see you."

"Can this be possible? My boy had the little finger of his left hand shot off by an Indian bullet."

Mart held up his left hand, from which the little finger was missing.

"The same bullet," he said, "passed through my mother's heart."

"Why did you not tell me who you were?" asked Captain Simms, as he folded his son to his breast.

"Because I first wanted to bring Lucy home to you."

"Why did you not tell *me*?" asked Lucy, as she subjected him to the same process, and completed the embrace by kissing him.

"Because I first wanted to take you home to your father. I might have been killed, and would not have wished you to miss me. But we have not yet settled the main question," continued Mart, in the midst of the general rejoicing. "As Ben Smiles won't marry Lucy, and as I can't marry her, I must agree with my old friend, and decide that Henry Denton deserves her, if any body does."

"The decision seems to be a just one," said Captain Simms. "What does Fanny say about it?"

"I am sure that I ought to make no objection," replied Lucy, with a blush that said more than her words.

At this point we leave the privacy of the revelist, and drop the curtain.

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<p>Dat's wat's de matter, The Miss esippi miracle, Ven te tide cooms in, Dase lains vot Mary haf got, Pat O'Flaherty on wo- man's rights, The home rulers, how they "spake," Hezekiah Dawson on Mothers in-law, He didn't sell the farm. The true story of Frank- lin's kite, I would I were a boy again, A pathetic story,</p>	<p>All about a bee, Scandal, A dark side view, Te pesser vay, On learning German, Mary's shinnall vite lamb A healthy discourse, Tobias so to speak, Old Mrs. Grimes, parody, Wars and cats, Bill Underwood, pilot, Old Granley, The pill peddler's ora- tion, Vidder Green's last words,</p>	<p>Latest Chinese outrage, The manifest destiny of the Irishman, Peggy McCann, Sprays from Josh Bil- lings, De circumstances ob de situation, Dar's nuffin new under de sun, A Negro religious poem, That violin, Picnic delights, Our candidate's views, Dundreary's wisdom, Plain language by truth- ful Jane,</p>	<p>My neighbor's dogs, Condensed Mythology, Pictus, The Nereides, Legends of Attica, The stove-pipe tragedy A doctor's drubbles, The coming man, The illigant affair at Muldoon's, That little baby round the corner, A genuwine inference, An invitation to the bird of liberty, The crow, Out west.</p>
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